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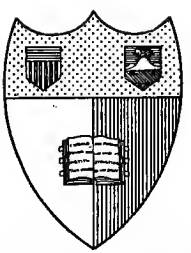

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LI HUNG-CHANG

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Chas. W. Mason
3/19/15

LI HUNG CHANG IN 1896.

LI HUNG-CHANG

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

MRS. ARCHIBALD LITTLE

AUTHOR OF "INTIMATE CHINA"
"THE LAND OF THE BLUE GOWN"
"MARRIAGE IN CHINA" "OUT IN CHINA"

WITH SEVERAL PORTRAITS, AND A MAP.

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W 1833

Dedication.

TO MY DEAR HUSBAND,

IN OUR DISTANT HOME IN WESTERN CHINA,

COUNTING UPON WHOSE CO-OPERATION I DARED TO UNDERTAKE

THIS WORK,

AND WHOSE RICHLY-STORED MEMORY,

CALM JUDGMENT,

AND SUSTAINING SYMPATHY I HAVE MISSED MORE AND MORE

WHILE WRITING EACH SUCCESSIVE PAGE.

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PREFACE.

I DESIRE to express my deep obligations to Mr. Alexander Michie's "The Englishman in China," and Professor Douglas's "Li Hung Chang" in the Public Men of To-day Series; and yet more to the *North China Herald*, that rich storehouse of information on all matters connected with the Far East; and to other contemporary newspapers both foreign and Chinese, the back numbers of which I have ransacked painfully and toilsomely for many a long month, trying wherever I could to reproduce the impressions of an eye-witness, or at least of one who wrote at the time, as sure to be more vivid than any carefully written after-account. Mr. W. C. Howard's short sketch of the Taiping Rebellion has been specially useful in this way, although I have taken for my guide as to Li's life accounts specially written for me by his own countrymen, whose names I do not give—any more than those of the many gentlemen who have kindly supplied me with much valuable information, and to whom I am indebted for many a telling anecdote; because they have themselves played no small part in the political events here touched upon, and being still connected with China would probably prefer to remain unknown.

The value of the tael has varied so greatly during Li Hung-chang's long life, that as it would be impossible for me to reproduce its exact value at different times I

have given all large money estimates in taels. With regard to measurements, I have taken a mile as the equivalent of ten Chinese *li*.

Although many more detailed accounts may yet be published of Li Hung-chang's financial enterprises and diplomatic successes, yet the fact that I am unable to give the secret history of these, having been in no wise implicated in them, may perhaps the better qualify me to write with that strict impartiality which I have tried to observe, not only about the man himself, but also of the friends and surroundings of one of the most brilliant figures of the nineteenth century.

ALICIA BEWICKE LITTLE.

PIONEER CLUB, GRAFTON STREET.

LI HUNG-CHANG:

HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—THE BEGINNINGS OF LI HUNG-CHANG (1823–1851).

WRITING the biography of Li Hung-chang is writing the history of the nineteenth century in China. Of all the men who have crossed the world's stage in the Far East during that eventful period he stands out as the one prominent personality; without whose agency no war was undertaken nor treaty concluded—and during the period of Li's lifetime China has been engaged in no fewer than six foreign wars and in innumerable domestic rebellions. Li was indeed the Grand Old Man of China, much as Gladstone was the Grand Old Man of England, Bismarck of Germany, and Cavour of Italy. In some ways Li occupied a greater place in China, as well as in the eyes of all Europeans who had dealings with China, than did even Gladstone in England; for he was the one man to whom the distracted Manchu Government inevitably had recourse, each time that the crass ignorance of the princes of the ruling Imperial House had brought the country to the verge of ruin. He was also the one man in China with whom foreign envoys found it possible to engage in reasonable discussion. As he stood head and shoulders above the masses of his countrymen in physical stature, so he excelled them in mental calibre; in his perception of international policy and appreciation of his country's true position in the world. That he is not indisputably acknowledged as a great man is in some measure

because the Chinese race is incapable of producing what we esteem a great man, and that he is not more respected by his countrymen is largely owing to the bitter enemies he made by his distribution of patronage, to his reputed avarice, and to the fact that, in wars into which his fellow officials stumbled, and in negotiations, where he was called on, after the event, to put things right, Li was unable, owing to circumstances, to bring out his country as victor in any one of the long series.

Thus it was that he earned the hatred and contempt of many of his contemporaries, who saw in him only the destroyer of his country's honour, much as large masses of people at home regard Gladstone's rule as having all but proved the ruin of England. But Li never held the power of action that is enjoyed by a Prime Minister even in a country under representative government: he was but a link in the chain of corrupt officialdom that has for centuries been throttling the country, a chain which he could not break without a bloody revolution, such as some of his foreign admirers credited him with meditating at one time, though of this design on the part of Li himself no evidence whatever exists. On the contrary, distinguished loyalty to the dynasty was conspicuous throughout his whole career; and that, standing out as he did as the foremost man of his nation, he did not accomplish more for his country—so that his name goes down to posterity rather as a clever opportunist in politics than as what many at one time hoped he would turn out, the saviour of his country—may be at least in great measure attributable to the condition of China herself; where deceit and corruption are deep-rooted, so that no step can be taken without a bribe, and the higher the official rank the greater the demands on the purse and the heavier the "presents" that subordinates must make to their superior to enable him to meet these demands.

Such as he was, Li Hung-chang was a striking product of his age and country: for fifty years on end he served his Government to the best of his capacity, from the time when, as a young man, he aided his father to raise militia

in his native province to repulse the Taiping rebels, to the day when, on his death-bed in Peking, he strove to modify the necessarily hard terms imposed upon his defeated country by an indignant European convention. Such a career is worthy of study if we care to gain an insight into the workings of the most long-lived civilisation the world has yet seen, and must be of perennial interest to the student of human nature as well as to the philosophic historian interested in watching the development of world-wide issues. The study of Li's life and character should prove of practical value to the statesman as well as of scientific interest to the student. I have here sought to give an account of it that may be of interest to the general reader.

When we in Europe think of Li Hung-chang, it is perhaps in connection with the Taiping rebellion, during which we dimly remember that he committed some act of treachery against Gordon, which roused almost to madness the righteous anger of the soldier whom the English people delight also to honour as saint. Or we think of him as the Chinese official, from whom all company promoters and enterprising adventurers generally have for years past tried to obtain concessions in China, receiving sometimes only a rebuff for their pains; the man with whom all travelling members of Parliament and other round-the-world men obtained interviews, writing long paragraphs as to the extraordinary honour each in turn maintained had been somewhat exceptionally granted—but by whom they were, as a rule, rather themselves interviewed and very successfully turned inside out. Then we recollect that, after the Japanese War, Li was dismissed from office and had all his honours taken away, because the Chinese had been defeated; that he was afterwards sent over to arrange terms of peace and was shot at by some Japanese fanatic, thereby being reinstated in favour in the world's eyes, at least as far as Europe was concerned; that he was next sent to Moscow to offer congratulations on the occasion of the Tzar's coronation, and thus himself became a round-the-world man; that he was treated with the highest honour each nation in

turn could heap upon him; and was then, to the surprise of Europe, on his return, greeted with ignominy rather than congratulation, and deprived of his yellow riding jacket as well as of various other articles which we persist in associating with his toilette, though they might better be described as his decorations, like our own garter, collars, ribands, and clasps.

Then, possibly, we remember that he was sent as Viceroy to Canton, till he suddenly declared he had received an Imperial Edict from Peking—which we believed at that time to be cut off from all telegraphic communication with the rest of the world, just because the Diplomatic Corps there shut up were thus cut off; that he then came up to Shanghai, where no one would call upon him, or acknowledge his authority or be seen talking to him, till at last he set an arm-chair on the pathway of the fashionable drive, and there, surrounded by his suite, chatted with any passer-by who would condescend; that he was then suddenly appointed, in conjunction with "Prince Ching and others," to settle terms of peace with almost all the nations of the civilised world; and at length somewhat fearfully set out upon his journey to Peking, the last of all his many wanderings. For there, on Nov. 7, 1901, aged seventy-eight, the "grand old man" of China, as he has often been called, died, in harness to the end; killed, as all agree, by over-worry and anxiety, though there is some little difference in the accounts as to what caused the anxiety—of what nature was the worry.

It is difficult to say whether the man in the street, when he spoke of "good old Li," as he loved to call him, thought of him as more than a grand old figurehead in the many pageants of his European tour. And a grand old figurehead Li Hung-chang certainly was. But it is interesting to notice that, in a long biography published in a Chinese newspaper on the occasion of his death, not one of the facts mentioned above is even so much as alluded to, barring his appointment as Viceroy of Canton. Curiously enough, the facts we remember, because we find them interesting, the Chinese newspaper writer thinks beneath notice; whilst those he enumerates are somewhat of the dry-as-dust order. However,

for every personage a skeleton is required, and these last, after all, form the skeleton of Li's life. But it is well to begin with this reminder, that if we look at Li's career solely from the European standpoint, we must get it out of all drawing

Li was born in 1823, at Ho-fei in the Anhui province. where he was also brought up. Like the eighteen provinces of China proper, Anhui is divided into two parts by that grand waterway the Yangtse River. A large portion of the province is low-lying ground liable to be submerged in the summer floods when the river, red-brown and swollen, spreads out to a breadth of eight or ten miles, not quite as in the days of Marco Polo, yet looking still, as he said, like a sea. Anhui is chiefly remarkable for its cities, among them Nganking, its capital (best known to English people as the training centre of the China Inland Mission), and Wuhu, a treaty port; it is also remarkable for supplying more rice in proportion to its area than any other province in China—and also more holders of office; but this last may be in some measure thanks to the Li family. Li's father, at one time Senior Secretary of the Board of Punishments, was, as Li himself tells us, one of that great body of Literati, of whom there are so many in China that they make quite a formidable class; mostly unemployed, studious, disappointed men, of keen critical faculties and small means; not ready naturally to welcome foreigners, especially foreigners eager to upset the teachings of the great Confucius; yet forming perhaps the most worthy part of the nation; whom anyone wanting to move the nation in any direction must first try to win.

Young Li was educated in the orthodox Chinese manner; and although he is reported to have had a reprehensible predilection for play as a boy, he in due course obtained the degree of Provincial graduate at Peking in 1845, became a Metropolitan graduate in 1848, and in 1851, the year of our Great Exhibition, got the title "Released from Study." Later he received that of Second-class Hanlin Compiler, and ranked as one of the chief Chinese Compilers of a Pavilion of the Imperial Palace

In China literary excellence is the passport to all high posts; and an Oxford first-class man would be expected to go out to war and, sitting in a tent or driving along in a carriage with paper and pencil, to be able to direct Lord Kitchener or any other mere general as to tactics as well as strategy. After all, we do not now ourselves expect our generals to ride in front of their armies on showy white horses, waving their swords, as they used to do in pictures. Our own War Office and Admiralty are not free from the tendency to subordinate naval and military men to civilians; but in China, where the military profession is much looked down upon, this is a peculiarly characteristic practice. Accordingly, when an Imperial Edict declared that Tseng Kwo-fan (father of the late popular minister at St. James's who was known to us as the Marquis Tseng), the most respected man in China of his time, wanted secretaries, the brilliant young student Li was among those sent forth to Anhui. Since he was himself an Anhui man, one cannot help wondering whether some favouritism was not shown to Li from the first; for he must at once have found himself among that host of friends and relatives who in after years, when he had attained to the highest posts in the Empire, became such a sore trouble to him with their constant requests for patronage, that Li Han-chang, his elder brother, is said to have been actually driven out of the province by their importunity. Standing six foot four, with eyes about whose brilliance men who knew him but shortly after still speak enthusiastically, he must have presented a very fine appearance at this time. He was not only tall, but for a Chinese unusually athletic and active; so that a local newspaper described him as riding across country as well as any Shanghai paperchase rider.

Seven months after this appointment Li was reported favourably to the Throne for skilful management in dealing with a portion of the Taiping rebellion; with the result that he was immediately promoted to the sixth degree in rank, with the privilege of wearing the "blue plume" or crow's feather—a satisfactory opening for his public career.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE TAIPING REBELLION (1851—1862).

In 1851, when Li Hung-chang was about twenty-eight, and was still occupied with securing degrees, the great Taiping rebellion broke out—a rebellion which was to devastate China for over thirteen years with a destruction of human life far exceeding that of the whole Thirty Years' War in Germany, and which opened with the taking by the rebels of Yung-ngan (*i.e.*, the city of Eternal Peace).

It took its rise among the despised Hakka race of Southern China, who, never binding their women's feet, leave them able to work and thus set the men free to study.

Its originator, Hung Shü-chuen, afterwards known as the Heavenly Prince, was born about thirty miles from Canton, and even at fourteen was so remarkable for his abilities that his teachers and relatives joined together to pay for his further education. He was placed high at the examinations, but for some reason was given a lesser rank than that to which he was entitled. This made him sick with grief, both the fact and the sickness having been predicted to him beforehand by a Christian colporteur who gave him some books. Looking through these, years afterwards, when he had been for some time a village schoolmaster—a position far more esteemed in China than it is with us—and recalling the circumstances, he found the books to consist largely of texts from the Bible, in which he discovered an explanation of his own visions in his sickness six years before. Thereupon he and his friends formed congregations and became known by the name of the God-worshippers. In 1846 they obtained further religious instruction from a Mr. Roberts, an American missionary in Canton; but owing to

jealousy on the part of the latter's Chinese assistant, they returned home without much instruction, and began once again to preach. A few months afterwards, whilst the congregation of about five thousand were deep in prayer, two of the principal teachers were overcome by what they believed to be a Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and from that time one spoke as the representative of our Father in Heaven, the other as the Brother of Jesus. Adverse stress has been laid upon this last expression, but how should a Chinese, taught to consider himself the son of God and Jesus the Son of God, possibly see any irreverence in calling himself the brother of Jesus?

With fierce and fanatical missionary zeal they at once set to work to break up one of the most esteemed images in the neighbourhood—would not many Europeans on their first entrance into China wish to do likewise?—destroyed the vessels of spice and incense burning in front of it, were arrested and imprisoned. By bribing the officials, one, Fung Yun-san, was released; the other died in prison through the cruel treatment of his jailers. A clan fight broke out in 1850 between the Hakkas and the other local Chinese; the Hakkas took refuge with the God-worshippers, and all suffered much persecution. Some were imprisoned, some died in jail; Hung Shü-chuen, warned that he was about to be arrested, took refuge with Fung Yun-san among the mountains. There they were blockaded by the soldiers, but sent messages to their friends, the other God-worshippers, who routed the soldiers, seized a market village near by surrounded by creeks, and then, being short of provisions, were obliged to fly during the night.

This in fact was the actual beginning. Gradually Hung Shü-chuen proclaimed his intention to expel the alien Manchu Dynasty, then as now ruling over China, and to establish a native dynasty of universal peace—*T'ai ping*. He became Tien Wang, or Heavenly Prince; Fung Yun-san, Nan Wang or Southern Prince; and Western, Northern and Eastern Princes were also appointed. They determined to adopt the old Chinese dress worn under the Ming, the last

Chinese Dynasty. For the Chinese connect dress very closely with politics. So when there was some talk of dividing China into spheres of influence, those in the Yangtse Valley were always wondering what the English would make them wear; and so, after the Japanese defeat, that was again the great question. The shaven front of the head and plaited pigtail had been imposed upon them by the Manchus. The Taipings at once discarded this and wore their hair long with hoods over their heads and yellow silk jackets. The Triad Society at first joined them, but, owing to one of the latter's leaders being found out in defrauding the Treasury, they drew off. Curiously enough, two women, reputed to be of great valour joined the rebels from the first, each having about two thousand men followers.

When they had taken the city of Eternal Peace, the Heavenly Prince issued a proclamation. "Oh, ye multitudes, listen to our words. We conceive that the Empire belongs to the Chinese, and not to the Tartars; the food and raiment found therein belong to the Chinese, and not to the Tartars; the men and women inhabiting this region are subjects and children of the Chinese, and not of the Tartars. . . . Ever since the Manchus spread their poisonous influence through China, the vapour of corruption has defiled the Celestial Throne; the offensive odour has spread over the four seas; while the Chinese, with bowed heads and dejected spirits, willingly became the servants of others. How strange it is that there are no men in China!" It then goes on in the style of vituperation of low men of all countries, accusing the Manchu-Tartars of being a crossbreed of a white fox and a red dog; but it further adds that the Manchus are only 100,000, while the Chinese number 50,000,000—which certainly seems a reason against the latter being ruled by the former, but is also a very different figure from the 400,000,000 with which we are in the habit of hearing China credited.

The Taipings marched through Hunan Province, capturing cities with hardly any opposition, until they besieged Chang Sha, the provincial capital, and, trying to carry it by storm,

were beaten back each time. Then they crossed the great Tungting Lake to Yochow, capturing a great number of war junks carrying grain and treasure. Next down the Yangtse, taking Hanyang and Hankow, then crossing over and capturing Wuchang, the provincial capital of Hupeh, on January 12, 1853. Delegates sent by the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce describe the scene before this occurred: "The abandonment was most complete; not a house nor a shop was opened; and it became equally impossible to purchase goods, to check quotations, or pursue inquiries." Sir Harry Parkes gives a more dramatic account:—

> Darkness fell upon crowds of the people, lying with their weeping families and the débris of their property under the walls of Wuchang, anxious only to escape from defences that should have proved their protection. . . . The noise and cries attending their embarkation continued throughout the night, but daylight brought with it a stillness that was not less impressive than the previous commotion. By that time all the fugitives had left the shore, and the river, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with junks and boats of every description, bearing slowly away up-stream the bulk of the population of three cities, which a few days before we had computed at 1,000,000 of souls.

Only Mr. W. C. Howard, who took part in the rebellion, and rose to be Colonel of the 4th Chinese Regiment, mentions that "the Governor and a large number of his staff and men" fell in defence of Wuchang, the provincial capital of Hupeh, only separated by the great river Yangtse from the well-known great tea centre of Hankow, and for years the residence of China's most learned Viceroy Chang Chih-tung, known as the incorruptible.

Kiukiang was taken by the Taipings on February 18th, 1853, Nganking on February 25th, Wuhu on March 4th, and on March 8th they arrived before the walls of Nanking; which they captured on March 19th by the explosion of a well-laid mine under the north-east angle of the city wall, making a large breach. Through this the Taipings rushed, entering the city and paralysing the Imperialists, who

appeared to be unable to fight or flee, throwing themselves on the ground before the rebels, and crying out "O Prince, Prince, spare us, spare us!" Over 30,000 are believed to have been slaughtered there and then—the abject terror of the Imperialists rendering this possible—as a reprisal for their own indiscriminate slaughter of the Taipings.

Although well aware that every sin is really a stupidity, this seems so great a blunder that one cannot help marvelling over it; for if the Taipings had not killed all the quiet, peaceable Chinese, they might gradually have attained to empire over the whole race. Nor can we doubt that the scenes he then saw impelled Admiral Sir James Hope to cast the power of England on the side of the Imperialists, thus leading to the eventual overthrow of the rebels. He had not seen the Imperialists victorious, and gathered that they alone were capable of establishing law and order. But in national, as in family quarrels, no outsider should interfere unless prepared to adjust matters after the fighting is over. Had the Taipings and Imperialists been let alone there can be little doubt but that the Manchu Dynasty would have been overthrown, and China would have been saved from this corrupting rule; as also possibly from the Japanese defeat and all that so far has come after it. For the ill government and consequent sufferings of the Chinese people Sir James Hope, Gordon, and others, who set up once more the tottering Manchu Dynasty and did not bind it by any conditions towards its ill-used people, must surely be held responsible each in their degree. Interference in others' affairs, to result in good, must be thorough and far-reaching. But that it was not so is probably rather the fault of the British Government at home than of the Englishmen in China.

Chinkiang and Yangchow were taken; the Taipings had thus the entire command of the Yangtse as also of the communication by the Grand Canal; they established themselves at Nanking and sent a column north through Anhui, Shanting, and Southern Chihli, eventually even capturing a city not twenty miles distant from Tientsin. Here it

was that in 1853 Li Hung-chang, leading his regiment of militia against the rebels, first won favourable notice and promotion, as we have seen, in the opening months of his public career.

During an interval of several years the progress of the revolt does not demand our detailed attention: an episode in the relations of China and the European Powers assumes the chief prominence. Up to 1862 Li's personal affairs may be summarised in a paragraph.

In 1856 the death of Li's father, who, together with his stalwart son, had enlisted a local force for the defence of the district, obliged Li to absent himself from service during the mourning period. But he had just before been again mentioned in a memorial as having overcome a rebellion, so in spite of his mourning he was given promotion to the rank of a Prefect, with the single-eyed peacock's feather instead of the crow's. In the last month but one of that year, after he had wisely managed the outbreak at Lü-chou-fu, the same official patron who had mentioned him before mentioned him again; and by Imperial Edict he was made an "expectant Taotai," to be appointed to some post as soon as his time of mourning should have expired. Then in 1857, in accordance with the same superior's recommendation, he was promoted to be Provincial Judge, on account of his successful settlement of the Wei Wei Chow outbreak. Li was among those sent to another official who petitioned for the help of secretaries from the Capital; but two months afterwards he was ordered down to Foochow as an acting Taotai, though he never went. In 1862 he was appointed acting Governor, and then Governor, of Kiang-su, and on the official, who was then Superintendent of Foreign Commerce and Commissioner of Customs, being summoned to Peking, Li was directed to take charge of his offices.

Thus began that intercourse with foreigners which was to terminate only with his death; for Shanghai, opened to foreign trade in 1843, is in Kiang-su, and that province being in open rebellion, Li often had to reside in Shanghai itself among foreigners for safety. One cannot help pausing

to wonder what would have been Li's career if no one from afar had come intruding into China; for Li's reputation amongst foreigners has always far exceeded that which he bore among his own countrymen, who always say he is indebted for his high place to the special favour of Tze Hsi—now Dowager Empress, then the youthful concubine of the Emperor Hsien Fêng, "already tottering to his grave, a decrepit, worn-out man of barely thirty years."

At this juncture the Arrow War, so called from the name of the boat flying our flag, which the Chinese first seized, had come to an end; Lord Elgin had concluded his Tientsin Treaty and hurried away; the Peking campaign had followed in 1860; and the English and French forces, acting, as the Chinese despatches said, contrary to all the rules of war, instead of coming on from the front like an honourable foe, had attacked the Taku forts from the rear. They had marched on Peking, from which the Emperor, Hsien Fêng, with his wife the Empress, and among others the young concubine, then so little thought of, now so well known, had already fled to Jehol; they had burnt the Summer Palace; and then withdrawn in haste—indicating fear to the Chinese.

The only nation that seemed to have derived real, tangible advantage from the whole business was one that had done no fighting, but that seems like the Chinese to understand diplomacy, and in this case had certainly outwitted the Chinese. For General Ignatieff, the Russian representative, not only gave the English and French the benefit of his superior information, as the Russians did again in 1900; he also furnished them with an admirable map of Peking, drawn up by a learned member of the always resident Russian Mission in Peking—meanwhile impressing upon Prince Kung, who represented his fugitive brother the Emperor, that what he stood in need of was some friendly Power that would persuade the English and French armed forces to retire. This he promised to arrange, obtaining for Russia in return the fine province of Primorski, with 600 miles of coast-line, including the magnificent harbour of Vladivostock. When Prince

Kung, a year later, learnt that there never had been the least intention of keeping any foreign soldiers in Peking, and that consequently, he had given away this fine province for nothing, he is said to have looked aghast, then said solemnly, "Do you mean to say we have been deceived?" "Utterly," said another "diplomatist." This seems to have been Russia's first great step backward towards becoming once more an Asiatic Power, a position from which her greatest ruler, Peter the Great, tried so hard to remove her, labouring always to make a European Power of a nation partly Asiatic. How far General Ignatieff's diplomacy also taught the Chinese a lesson in duplicity may be questioned. Russians and Chinese come originally from the same stock, neither of them attaching quite the same significance to truth that is attached to it in Europe. But certainly Prince Kung and the Chinese generally must then have learnt that one other nation could deceive at least as well as themselves, and in this instance had certainly got the better of them.

Though in all these affairs Li—destined to be looked upon as a lion-tamer, a man specially calculated to deal with fierce foreigners—had played no part, yet it is well to reflect upon this little matter of Primorski; for there can be no doubt that the still youthful Li pondered over it, and in effect took his first great lesson in diplomacy from the Russian General Ignatieff—as he certainly took his last from M. Lessar, the recently appointed Russian Minister Plenipotentiary in Peking.

CHAPTER III.

THE TAIPING REBELLION: THE EPISODE OF BURGEVINE (1863).

With Li Hung-chang's appointment, in 1862, to the Governorship of Kiangsu, we return to the story of the Taipings. At that date the greater part of the new governor's province was in the hands of the rebels, and, as Sir Halliday Macartney somewhat tersely puts it, "Li was governor certainly, but he could not go anywhere."

The Taiping army had not done much after the capture of Nanking till after the British defeat at the Taku Forts in 1859. But when the allied troops, British and French, marched on Peking, nearly all the cities about Shanghai and Ningpo fell into the rebels' hands, and one of their princes with a large force threatened Shanghai. They had already captured Hangchow, the capital of the province of Chekiang and at one time the capital of China, as also Soochow. These places are both great silk centres, and the proverb says, "See Soo and Hang and die." But the Taipings were still always wanting an outlet to the sea so as to secure more war material, and Shanghai, too, was therefore to be desired.

Meanwhile many of those adventurers who seem always to rise to the surface in war time had joined the rebel ranks; and now the Imperialists in their turn raised a foreign force, several Chinese Shanghai merchants arranging to provide the funds, whilst Ward, a Californian, was appointed to the command. The latter seems to have been a brave, fearless man; but when he was shot in the back, while going up a breach, most probably by an accidental shot from one of his own men, after commanding the force for only two years, he left behind him a fortune of £15,000, which fact speaks for itself. All the time there had been contests about money the

Chinese merchants keeping the foreigners in arrears of pay, and they insisting on being paid. Then was the golden age for foreigners in China; young men, just sent out from England as clerks, drew their salaries but never entered their offices, serving as volunteers or carrying sums of money through a country known to be infested with rebels, and declaring afterwards that they had never been so civilly treated: then also it was that men made fortunes. There were no telegrams in 1863 to confuse and hamper people. Those on the spot, who knew the circumstances, had a free hand, and everyone was young and hopeful. It was indeed a fine time for young men. But amongst them were that extraordinary set who seem to know when there is trouble brewing, as crows scent out a dead body from a distance, and who come from the far corners of the earth to fish in troubled waters. It is when one thinks of the effect upon the Chinese of an influx of foreigners like these that one feels sick at heart.

There were foreigners fighting on the Taiping side, and there were foreigners on the Imperialist side. What they were like we can gather from this description by an anonymous writer in the local paper at Nanking, the Taiping headquarters; one whose utterances were known as "A Voice from Nanking":—

Dec. 19*th*, 1863.—All the fulminations of the Wangs were of no avail—that pure worship on which we had so long prided ourselves was degraded and debased, and little trace was left of the instructions imparted by our foreign brethren in former days. And, in truth, the conduct of the foreigners who lived amongst us was more than sufficient to shake the faith of many, and to convince them that the Christian teachers, who had so little influence over their own countrymen, could hardly claim to control the religious belief of the denizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. Days and nights spent in drunkenness and abominable debauchery rendered those foreign levies, on which we so much depended, worse than useless; until, at length, at such a pitch of wickedness did they arrive, that all confidence was lost in them, and we were compelled to use them as drudges, instead of following them as leaders. Yet even then, we did not doubt that if the Western Powers knew of our existence as a

people, and appreciated our sufferings and our struggles, they would acknowledge us, even although they might look on us as foes . . .

There was always something grand about the utterances of this Voice.

Burgevine, another American, was appointed as Ward's successor. Almost before he took command, a Russian officer arrived in Shanghai with authority to place at the disposal of the Governor 10,000 Russian troops—much the same offer as Russia made again in 1900. Then it was that Li Hung-chang showed his capacity, for even in China's extremity he declined this offer with thanks, evidently thinking 10,000 Russians might prove even more difficult to deal with than the Taipings.

Some people thought that Ward had intended from the first to make himself master of China. Li had been on his guard with him, he was yet more on his guard with Burgevine. The position of a weak country using reckless mercenaries is always difficult, and the time-honoured method of letting pay get into arrears was often resorted to. Li and the patriotic Association at Shanghai had been compelled to subscribe £30,000 a month for the force, and Li contended they were thereby entitled to have an officer in command, in whom they could feel confidence. He visited General Stavely in command of the British troops and begged him to remove Burgevine. General Stavely professed himself unable. Takee was the principal merchant in the Patriotic Association, and, to quote Mr. Howard's very racy account, "Takee refused to give any more money until the accounts were forthcoming. Sometimes the force was nearly two months without pay. The men would frequently ask for it when at drill. Burgevine would order a general parade, and tell the men he would go to Shanghai and bring up their pay. This occurred nearly every week, the soldiers yelling every time they were told this. Finally, Burgevine took twenty of his bodyguard, went to Shanghai, demanded the money from Takee, and when told he could not have it, slapped Takee's face. Takee was now a high official, but Burgevine, caring nothing for his rank, called in his men and took the money by force, after which he

returned and paid his troops. This caused Burgevine's dismissal, though all that General Stavely even then could do was to tell him Li had dismissed him from his command."

A Captain Holland was appointed to succeed him, greatly to the dissatisfaction of the men, who considered that roysterous Burgevine had been dismissed for demanding their pay. Li, however, instantly paid them in full, and Burgevine carried his complaints to Peking, where Sir Frederick Bruce was at first more than inclined to sympathise with him. Li had wanted the foreign force, of which he was getting to feel strong suspicions, to march to Nanking outside his own jurisdiction, that he might thus get rid of them altogether. An English officer, however, taking command, rendered this impossible; and he therefore ordered them at once to attack a fortified town long held by the rebels. General Stavely protested that the force was quite insufficient to attack a walled town, but Li stubbornly replied that if the force could not undertake a little thing like that it was not worth keeping up. They were repulsed, losing 2 large siege guns, 6 officers, 4 marines, and 180 men killed, 14 officers and 160 men wounded. "This finished Holland," to quote Mr. Howard again; and Major Gordon, R.E., who had been engaged in making a survey of the country round, being ordered at once to take command, straightway captured the fortified town of Fushan. Li at once recognised his merits in a memorial to the throne, and Gordon was made a Chinese Brigadier-General.

Dr., later Sir Halliday, Macartney, had sent in his Papers with a view to taking Chinese employ, but as he had not yet heard of their having been received he was not yet free. From the first, however, he was, by the outside world, considered a rival of Gordon's. Being engaged as doctor for the force, he frequently visited Shanghai in a small steamer. One day, no sooner had he left her, than Burgevine (late Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Disciplined troops), with a man who had been in command of a steamer, but had been dismissed by the Viceroy, and two others who had been hiding behind some old ruins close by, boarded the vessel and backed her down the creek. When the officer left

behind came up breathless to tell Dr. Macartney, he was already some way off; and when at length soldiers had been roused, and all gave chase, it was already too late. The only way probably to stop her would have been to gallop to the mouth of the creek, and direct the barge which had been left there to be hauled across the stream and scuttled. But the two Generals, Chang and Li, had disappeared as soon as they heard that suspicious characters were about. And Burgevine and his friends got about £3,000 from the Taipings by this little adventure. General Chang had been with the rebels before he joined the Imperialist forces, as indeed, according to Mr. Michie, Li Hung-chang himself was at one time, writing despatches for them when a prisoner in their hands for a while. Possibly judging Gordon by the men he had seen among them, he, Chang being very much annoyed that Gordon would not attack a city as he wished, spread about the report that the latter had received £30,000 from the rebel chief, for retiring after the capture of Taitsan instead of taking Quinsan. He was also very impertinent; but presently a worse thing occurred; for on Gordon sending a small force to the assistance of a Chinese General surrounded by Taipings, his own force was suddenly surprised by the Imperial gunboats turning round and firing upon them with grape and round-shot. His force had no ammunition, so were compelled to run for it. Several men were killed and a good many wounded, and yet General Chang seemed to think it was a good joke, saying simply he did not know the flag. However, when Gordon reported the matter to Li Hung-chang, General Chang sent a letter of apology.

It is instructive to note that the latter, having previously been a rebel, had paid Li a large sum out of the Taiping funds, which he had secured before leaving them, to guarantee his fidelity, and with this money Li had purchased higher rank. This little incident is not often mentioned, but is it not rather characteristic of Li's whole career?

There had meanwhile been other troubles. Li had been induced to believe that the City of Taitsan would surrender, and had sent his brother with 2,000 men to arrange the terms; he had exchanged gifts with the rebel chiefs, among

other things presenting a number of official hats to be worn by them on joining the Imperial host. Clothes again! How Carlyle would have delighted in this gift! On April 26, 1,500 Imperialist soldiers were admitted into the city. They had, however, no sooner passed within the walls than the gate by which they entered was closed behind them, and they were made prisoners, 300 of their number being beheaded at once. Gordon's men were driven back in the first instance, but on the second attempt took the town; and then ensued a scene so terrible that the Bishop of Hong Kong felt called upon to denounce it, whilst newspapers blamed Gordon for permitting such atrocities. Among the prisoners taken were seven rebel chiefs, whom Gordon handed over to the Chinese general. No one seems to know whether Li was consulted by the latter beforehand, but it is clear that he approved afterwards. Here are the facts as related by an eye-witness:—

June 13th, 1863.—About 11 o'clock a.m. on the day following the capture of Taitsan (Sunday, May 3rd), seven prisoners were brought into the Imperialist camp, being stripped perfectly nude; they were each tied to a stake, and tortured with the most refined cruelty. Arrows appeared to have been forcibly driven into various parts of their bodies, head, region of heart, abdomen, etc., from whence issued copious streams of blood. This mode of torture falling short of satiating the demoniacal spirit of their tormentors, recourse was had to other means:—Strips of flesh were cut, or rather hacked (judging from the appearance presented, the instrument seemed too blunt to cut), from different parts of their bodies, which hanging by a small portion of skin, presented an appearance truly horrible. For hours these wretched beings writhed in agony. About sunset they were led forth more dead than alive by a brutal executioner, who, sword in hand, thirsting to imbrue his hand in blood, seemed the very incarnation of a fiend. Seizing his unfortunate victims, he exultingly dragged them forth, mocking and insulting them, and then by hewing, hacking and using a sawing motion, he succeeded eventually in putting an end to their sufferings by partially severing the head from the body.

In connection with this statement, which seems to bear

hardly upon Gordon, how touching is the testimony of the "Voice from Nanking":—

July 25th.—Far be it from me to assert that Gordon was privy to the massacres committed. . . . Yet never did the plains of China blush with blood more unrighteously spilled than on the day succeeding the capture of Quinsan, when the disorganised Hua contingent satiated itself with outrage. I have heard that Gordon grieved bitterly over the cruelties which he could not prevent. . . . Would to Heaven that some unworthy adventurer would take command, some one that could be slain without regret, and, if necessary, slaughtered without mercy. Often have I seen the deadly musket struck from the hand of a dastardly Englishman (tempted by love of loot to join our ranks) when he attempted, from his place of safety, to kill Gordon, who ever rashly exposed himself. This has been the act of a chief, yea, of the Shield King himself: how then can we be accused of blind hatred even to our enemies? Could we but look forward to the day when the learned foreigners would do as much for us as they have done for the degraded and degenerate Manchus, we would retire to the mountain fastnesses of Szechuan and Kwang-si, confident that whenever foreign aid and education should be extended to us we would sweep the dastard Manchus from the throne, and establish the descendant of Chu in the seat of his fathers. I must not now wait to explain to you the eagerness with which we would receive your Western improvements. . . .

How can I describe the state of things in Nanking? Penury, disease, famine, vice of all kinds, reign. The troops are demoralised, and openly declare that their allegiance to the younger Son of the Father is broken by the misfortunes which have of late followed his arms. In the poorer districts of the city, human flesh it is said is exposed for sale in the shambles, and even little innocent children have been sacrificed to satisfy the unconquerable hunger of their parents. Should we be unable to drive back the enemy within the next few weeks, the Empire of Peace must come to an end, and all hope of reinstating the glorious Ming line be abandoned. But never while the sun shines on the brethren of the mystic tie, never so long as they breathe the vital air, shall the Heavenly Kingdom perish. Rather would we rush to the forefront of the battle, and engage men or demons, far rather would we perish unknown, and without any of the glory which encircles

the man who dies for his principles, than survive the fortunes of our race, and stand the relics of a struggle which destroyed our country.

Yet, even now, standing as I and the other chiefs of this movement do, on the brink of ruin, a prophetic spirit seems to inspire me, and with the confidence of truth I declare that this rebellion will be crushed and not destroyed. If a government, adapted to the growing requirements of the country and the ever-progressive state of civilisation in the world, be established on a firm basis in China, then the dire effects of revolt may be prevented. But so long as corruption and bribery influence the courts of law, and spread their ramifications over the political and social life of the Empire, the injustice of the mandarins, and the venality of their officers will prevent China from ever advancing one step forward, and will leave in every province little nests of disaffection, which will ultimately spread over the land, and again flood China with the blood of her bravest and best.

The concluding words of prophecy cannot but be read somewhat sorrowfully by those with whom the memory of 1900 is ever present. Oh that an administrator filled with the same chivalrous spirit had been allowed to follow upon General Gordon's victorious steps!

Then came again the old difficulty—arrears of pay and the men becoming insubordinate. In consequence of this, probably also a little because of General Chang's treachery, Gordon sent in his resignation; but just then he heard of Burgevine (the late General in command) going over to join the Taipings, and he turned away his horse's head from Shanghai and rode back to his men; feeling that the appearance of Burgevine's standard with the Taipings might result in many of his old followers rejoining him if Gordon left the command. It is not recorded that Li showed any gratitude to Gordon for this; indeed, not unnaturally he was fully occupied in denouncing the United States consul for having let Burgevine go. Meanwhile, Gordon heard that a number of Europeans in rebel employ were ready to desert from Soochow. Several times he met them to discuss terms, Burgevine himself being present, and sometimes ready to

rejoin the Imperialists, sometimes not. It was on one of these occasions that he proposed to Gordon that they should together seize Soochow, and with an army of 20,000 men march on Peking. Small reason indeed had Li or the Chinese to feel grateful to, or repose confidence in, men like Burgevine! At last it was settled that all the Europeans "should make a sally from Soochow as if with the object of capturing the steamer Hyson, that they should be taken on board, and that they should be landed in the Imperial camp." All came off as intended, except that, to Gordon's surprise, Burgevine was not among the deserters, who, fearing the suspicions of the rebel leaders might be roused, had thought it best to come away by themselves. And now at last comes a noble touch in the midst of all this vileness. Gordon, unwilling to leave the wretched Burgevine to his fate, wrote to the Mo Wang—that is, Prince—in command at Soochow, asking of him to allow Burgevine to escape, and at the same time returning all the rifles the European deserters had brought with them. One spark of nobility is apt to enkindle another, and the Mo Wang actually allowed the twice-traitor Burgevine to leave the city alive.

Before concluding the Burgevine drama, with its miserable ending, we should note the Chinese view of the case as expressed in a communication from Li Hung-chang to the British Consul with some very effective Chinese arguments in it, too, which emphasise the Governor's clearness of vision at a time when as yet he had mixed but little with foreigners.

August 24th.—On the 22nd instant I received your communication to the effect that a notice has appeared in the newspapers offering a reward for the capture of Burgevine, dead or alive; and, further, to the effect that I have forgotten the treaty, and requesting me to withdraw the proclamation, etc., etc.

In reply, I observe that Burgevine has been invested with Chinese official rank, and has been employed as a military leader on behalf of the Chinese Government; and, having violated Chinese law, it is right that he should suffer the penalty attached by China to the crime. His case differs entirely from that of ordinary offenders of your honourable nation, who are to be handed over for

punishment to their Consul. In fact, when foreigners become invested with Chinese official rank and violate the laws within the limits of Chinese territory, by whom are they to be judged? The treaty contains no provision whatever on this point. How, then, can it be said that I am oblivious of the treaty?

Moreover, the crime committed by Burgevine is not one with which other offences can be brought into comparison. Having already received rank as a superior officer of the third grade, to strike an official and to disobey the orders of those in authority are in themselves a crime beyond excuse; yet the Board of Foreign Affairs and myself, from regard for the feelings of your honourable nation, refrained from pressing the matter. Burgevine has now, however, audaciously passed over to join the rebels at Soochow, and appears as the foe alike of China and of the forces of the several Powers engaged in the protection of Shanghai. Thus, Burgevine, having become one of the banditti, cannot be accounted as a citizen of your honourable nation; but if he still be accounted as such, it is certainly the Consul's duty to have restrained him betimes, and to have adopted measures of precaution. How is it that he has been allowed to join with the banditti? Furthermore, supposing that a Chinese subject were to become naturalised in your honourable country, and, after receiving marks of favour from the Government, were of a sudden to turn rebel—would no notice of him be taken by your honourable Government? Or could China endeavour to shield him with protection?

The principles of reason are the same, whether in China or with foreign nations, and it is the Consul's duty to assist me in capturing Burgevine and bringing him to justice, in fulfilment of the obligations of amity and goodwill. No principle exists which would justify his being suffered to join the rebels, or actually favoured with protection and support. As Governor, invested with supreme military authority in the province of Kiang-su, I am doing no more than arresting a rebel within the limits of my jurisdiction, in taking measures as at present for the seizure of Burgevine.

Your despatch itself asserts that the Consuls representing all the different Powers are agreed in saying that I, as Governor, am empowered to arrest Burgevine; and my proclamation was directed to no other end. Not a word is contained therein respecting any ulterior punishment. You appear to have attached a mistaken interpretation to the words "dead or alive," and to have supposed me

desirous of inflicting the penalty of death. I now distinctly state in reply that the expression "dead or alive" contained in the proclamation refers to the apprehension that, on Burgevine's capture, it cannot be certain that resistance will not be offered, and firearms be used in the fray, resulting in Burgevine's death, whilst I should not on this account be justified in withdrawing the reward offered by Proclamation.

At the present moment, the Consuls of all the Treaty Powers are ready to assist me in protecting this place, in order that security may be afforded to the trade of all nations, and, in seizing Burgevine, I am actuated by no other motive than that of ensuring the safety of the country and of the respectable mercantile community—an undertaking which is surely one of complete humanity and justice.

Foreign nations are all thoroughly actuated by principles of reason, and there is assuredly no danger of their becoming estranged on this account. The Consul may therefore set his mind at rest. There is nothing extraordinary in the Proclamation, and it is needless, therefore, to withdraw it. The Consul is requested to take note thereof.

Tung-Chih, 1st year, 7th month, 21st day.

Burgevine, once the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial foreign force, the Rebel Chieftain and traitor to the Imperialists, next the deserter and traitor to the rebels, without considering of what crimes he might be accused, left the safety of the foreign settlement and was captured. The local newspaper of the day proceeds with the story:—

He was discovered under some planks in a boat, armed to the teeth, but on being dragged out surrendered quietly and was, with his companions, a Portuguese and an Englishman, put in irons. The three were then carried to the magistrates' yamen and placed in confinement. The American Consul, hearing of what had occurred, demanded Burgevine's rendition, but was met by taunts levelled at his dereliction of duty in not arresting Burgevine when he had him in his power. The Consul, incensed, issued an ultimatum—Restore him by 12 o'clock to-morrow, or I will take him by force. So at midnight Burgevine and the others were despatched under military escort to Foochow, and the American Consul was for the first time apprised of the fact when he found the breakfast which he had sent to the prison for Burgevine returned

untasted. He refused to believe the intelligence, and at 12 o'clock he, with some companions, forcibly entered the yamen, and searched the prison. Therein (a fact highly significant in itself) were found an American and two Frenchmen. The former was borne off in triumph.

And the end of it all was that the American and English Consuls were officially notified that the dead bodies of Burgevine, his English companion, and the soldiers of the guard, were lying at a village near Ningpo.

There is the further fact that the United States Chargé d'Affaires, instead of demanding Burgevine's release, advised the Chinese authorities to retain him *until instructions should be received from Washington.* In giving advice we must always consider a little whether it is likely to be followed. When we know it is not it is hardly good advice to give. There is the further statement, which may or may not be true, but which is generally believed, that when the body of Burgevine was found lying in a ditch in a village in a north-westerly direction from Ningpo, it was in a terribly mutilated state. People would be sure to say this, whether it were so or not. It would, however, probably be true. "This finishes Burgevine," to use the somewhat quaint phraseology of W. C. Howard. Stanley Bennet, a negro, had been offered four hundred dollars by a foreign merchant to place Burgevine within the rebel lines in safety; but some old desire for vengeance still rankled within the negro's breast, and he preferred vengeance to money. Many a worthier man has passed from the world less thought about and fought over than Burgevine.

Great things were expected when Burgevine came over to us, boiling with rage, said the Voice from Nanking. . . . Soon, however, we found that, debilitated by wounds, and disgusted at finding himself arrayed in arms against the chief to whom the English in China point with so much pride, his spirits failed him, and he repented of the rash step he had taken. . . . Then, indeed, the magnanimity of our rulers was plainly shown. This man, whose presence had tended rather to injure our cause than to aid it, was freely allowed to depart, no injunction being even laid upon him to restrain him from betraying any of our secrets to our

opponents. And then also in truth did the true nobility of your English nation exhibit itself. Gordon, loth to take any unfair advantage of the difficulties of our position, sent us back the arms and boats which accompanied Burgevine and the men who left our ranks with him. . . . In future ages, when the present crumbling edifice which the Manchus have raised has sunk into ruins, and foreign nations shall be wasting blood and treasure over the question of the dismemberment of China, it will be deeply mourned that a dynasty possessed of vigour and enlightenment was not placed upon the throne, when the opportunity offered for so doing. In that day it will be found that had China been placed under the Christianising influence of the Taiping rule, the country would have regained its pristine fame, and foreigners would have found amongst the myriads of inhabitants, that some few still hold by the fame of their forefathers, and are willing to welcome any movement which seems to promise enlightenment and peace.

Alas! and alas! that no effort even was made to establish this Christianising rule! But what remarkable words these are!

CHAPTER IV.

THE TAIPING REBELLION: THE BETRAYAL OF FAITH (1863).

We must now turn to the taking of Soochow, after all the foreigners engaged had deserted the rebels and gone over to the Imperialists. Gordon and Halliday Macartney were occupying different commands, and apparently on very friendly terms. Sir Halliday, indeed, tells one of those romantic anecdotes with which the life of Gordon abounds. The latter asked Macartney to come with him in a boat on a lake. They rowed out quite to the middle, and there, since the boatmen could understand no language but their own, the two Englishmen held free converse, Gordon offering the other his command. This incident must probably have occurred soon after the fall of Taitsan, when Gordon, we know, wished to resign his position. Sir Halliday was then able to speak frankly out of the fulness of his heart, as one so seldom can in life: "Now, Gordon, I can say to you that whilst people have been calling me your rival and accusing me of plotting against you, I have never desired your command, and have only taken to military work to fill up my time while I am learning the language. My ambition is to be like the Jesuits in the middle ages, and to go to Peking and be a councillor there." Then Gordon sighed, looking over the lake's smooth surface, and saying: "I have many officers under me, all desiring the post, but they cannot take it. They cannot!"

It is a strange little incident, the two men alone in their boat in the middle of the lake but for their all-unconscious rowers beside them, the one offering the other command over

the armies of China; and may be put alongside, by way of contrast, with that other interview in the dark in the camp beside the celebrated fifty-three-arched bridge, when the unhappy Burgevine suggested to Gordon that together they should march on Peking and rule over China.

Again, if we want another half-dark picture we may see three of the rebel princes discussing with Gordon, at an outlying picket, the terms for handing over Soochow. There were said to be thirty-five expectant princes, and 30,000 men anxious to come over. These visits were often repeated, and at one the very General Chang, who had himself been a rebel, and then when in Li's employ had fired upon Gordon and his men by way of a joke, recognised in one of the princes a man with whom he had in earlier days, when they were fighting side by side, sworn brotherhood after the Chinese fashion. The plan at last agreed upon was that the other princes should induce the Mo Wang to come upon the ramparts to look at the foreigners' batteries. They would then thrust him over the wall, having got a boat in readiness beforehand, and thus hand him over to the Imperialists. It will be observed that Gordon consented to this, but also that there was not intended to be any killing in it.

On Dec. 4th, however, when several of the princes called upon the Mo Wang he prepared a dinner for them, and they, arrayed in their long robes and with crowns upon their heads, got heated in discussion, till the La Wang thinking all had been discovered began loosening and throwing off his over jacket. "What are you going to do?" asked the Mo Wang in surprise, seated at the head of his table as host. "What are you about?" The La Wang advanced rolling up the sleeve of his long gown, and for all answer stabbed the Mo Wang in the neck and back, so that he fell forward on the table dead. It is not a pleasant picture of a Chinese feast, but as a scenic effect it was dramatic. And I must beg the reader to pause upon it, and reflect that this was the action of the rebel princes among themselves, that no one raised a hand to avenge the murdered governor, and that in the end it turned out that the crime and the plotting had all been alike wasted,

for the Mo Wang, although he had said he and his men would fight to the end, had been quite as ready as the others to give up the city. At daybreak the foreign contingent saw the Mo Wang's men fighting on the top of the city wall against one of the other prince's men; who had already during the night shaved the fronts of their heads, so as to look like Manchu subjects wearing the pigtail mark of servitude, no longer long-haired rebels. And thus it was that rich, luxurious Soochow was surrendered to the Imperialists.

Li, always keen where money was concerned, at once wrote to Gordon that he would give each man two months' extra pay, if Gordon would only restrain them from entering the city and plundering; then with true mercantile haggling, after a visit to the city, he said it was not nearly as rich as he had expected, and that he could only give the force one month's extra pay. The men, who had been counting upon loot, which they thought much more of than their eight dollars and a-half per month, were so angry that next day, with the connivance of some of their officers, they marched off to Li Hung-chang's boat, doubtless to reason with him; but he on seeing them coming jumped into a small boat and was paddled to the other side of the creek, thus escaping them. After that, Gordon put a guard on Li's boat, to protect him. Gordon had, of course, promised the various princes that their lives would be safe if they surrendered Soochow. His own account of the proceedings was given as follows, in the Shanghai newspaper of December 12th.

There was no fighting in the city till the morning of the 5th, when the La Wang's men had some trouble with the Cantonese, and drove them out of the city, killing some fifty or sixty of them. General Chang's men advanced, and with a small body took charge of the Lo-gate, my men being kept fallen in, as they were under stricter discipline than the Imperialist soldiers are. On the night of the 4th December the rebels all shaved their heads. I went to the Futai, and, telling him that it would not do to let my men remain idle, proposed to him to march on Wusieh if he would give the men compensation of two months' pay, as they had received no reward since I had taken the command. He objected to it, and I told him

if he could only promise the matter could be settled—well. He still objected, and I then told him I should leave his service, and went myself to the city.

Here we find Gordon for the second time threatening to leave Li's employ. These repeated threats must have made Li look upon him as not quite to be counted upon.

The Imperialists had some men straying about, but not many. I went straight to La Wang's house, and saw him and all the Wangs. I asked him if all was right. He said that everything was satisfactory, and appeared quite secure. He had not seen Chang at that time. I went to Mo Wang's palace, and the body was where it had fallen. . . . I then at the Futai's (Li) request gave orders for the march to Quinsan. Chang told me at this time that the Futai had written to Pekin, and said that he had extended mercy to the Wangs and the rebels. Next morning, after the troops had left, I started for the city. I went to the Lo-gate, and there learnt that La Wang and the other Wangs and chiefs were to come out and see the Futai at twelve noon, and that the city would then be given over. I thought I had better see La Wang before I went out, so I called at his palace, and took him aside, and asked him if everything was all right, and if he wanted me to do anything. He said no, that everything was proper. I told him I was going to the Tai-hu, and he said, "Why not wait? I am coming to see you." I said it was important business, and that unless he particularly wished it or thought it necessary, I would not stay. He said "Very good," and I left. He passed me on his way to the Lo-gate very soon after on horseback with all the Wangs, going, as I supposed, to the Futai. I went then to Mo Wang's palace, and then to the east or Lo-men to wile away the time till the steamers could get round.

Gordon and Sir Halliday Macartney stood together on the top of the wall; they had seen the Wangs pass out, and now they saw a commotion in the Imperialist camp. Even now all these years afterwards it is impressive to hear Sir Halliday tell the tale, so great becomes his agitation, as he says: "It was really the murder, but we did not know it. We heard a great noise, we saw something was happening." Gordon continues:—

I thought it was the ceremony of submission going on. A few minutes after, perhaps 12.30 p.m., a large body of Imperial soldiers came up, and, passing the gate, rushed cheering into the city, as they generally do into vacated stockades. I thought little of it, more than expressing my disapprobation to some of them. They, however, came on, pouring in, firing off their muskets in the air, and yelling. Chang then came up and looked rather pale. I asked him if the interview was over, and if it had been satisfactory. He said that La Wang had not been to the Futai at all. I said I had seen him going with the others. He said no, that he could not say for certain, but that he thought he had run away. I said I could not make out what for, as I had just seen La Wang, and he said everything was all right. I asked Chang if there was any trouble. He said that La Wang had demanded the command of 2,000 men and of half the city of Soochow, the division to be a wall, and that the Futai had refused it, and also that he had let some of Chung Wang's men in. The latter part I knew to be false, but, strange to say, I believed the former portion. I asked him where La Wang could go to. He said that he would not go back to the rebels, but that he would go to some village, and settle there. I thought the thing so strange that I asked Dr. Macartney, who was by me, to go to La Wang's house, and to see him, and tell him not to fear anything. Chang then told me that his men alone would be allowed in, and that there would be no looting, and as I knew before that he had his men in good discipline, I had no fear, and therefore rode round the wall with him. He kept on firing volleys in the air, which I remonstrated at, and could not make out the object. He said it was merely to prevent Kwangsi men from doing anything to his men while they were taking possession of the city. I became uneasy about La Wang, and at the south gate I left General Chang, and rode off to La Wang's palace. I got there at dark, and found it had been gutted. I was then met by La Wang's uncle, who asked me to come to his house. Being only with my interpreter I had no one to send to General Chang or for my troops, but the entreaties of this Tien-Chuang being so great I agreed to do so, and therefore went with La Wang's family to his house. When I got there his men were all fallen in, and the streets barricaded. I wanted to send my interpreter for assistance, but they would not let him go. I therefore remained till 2 a.m., keeping away the Imperial looting parties. At 2 a.m. I sent my interpreter and an Imperial

soldier who was with my horse, to get the steamers round to Wai-quai-dong to make the Futai answerable, and also sent for my body-guard. After he had started, the man who went with him came back and said he had been beheaded by the Imperialists. I remained till 4 a.m., and then went out to send orders to the steamers myself. I was taken by the Imperialists and detained an hour.

At last I got to the Low-men, and sent the bodyguard to the La Wang's uncle's house, but it was too late, the Imperialists had entered and gutted it. I then went to the Low-men, and there met General Chang, to whom I gave my opinion. He was most anxious to excuse himself, but I did not listen to him. At this time I did not know the Wangs had been beheaded. I then went down to Chang's stockades, and met Major Baily, commanding Chang's artillery there. He said that General Chang was very much put out, that the Futai had ordered him to execute the Wangs, and had given orders to the troops to enter the city, that he had lost face, etc. etc. Baily then told me that he had La Wang's son, and brought him to me. I refused any communication with General Chang. La Wang's son came to my boat and, pointing to the other side, said it was there that the Wangs had been executed. I went over, and recognised Kung Wang's, La Wang's, Sieh Wang's and Sung Wang's heads, but the body of La Wang was not to be seen—having been buried. I took, at the son's request, La Wang's head. The bodies had been cut down the chest, and the wounds on the head were most horrible, showing the brutality of the executioners. I then was waiting for the steamers, as I had heard that there were some high persons still in custody, and I thought that I could frighten the Futai into giving them up. He, however, heard of my arrival, and went off to the city. I left him a note telling him my opinion, and then moved off with the steamers to Quinsan. I received just before leaving a letter from Fu-tzu-quai telling me that a chief had come over with 3,000 men to my officer in command, and that he, the officer in command, had received them. I sent orders to him to inform the chief of the treachery, and to let him go with his men and arms, if he liked, or else to bring his troops to Quinsan.

Is not this a time for foreign governments to come forward and arrange the terms? The power is in this force if the authority from Pekin is given to it to act under some honest Chinaman.

What is now to be feared is that foreigners will join the rebels, and will thus cause the war to linger on to the extermination of the unfortunate people on whom the burden falls, and to the detriment of trade of every sort. That the rebels really do not possess the qualities of government cannot be doubted. They merely hold cities, and let the villages govern themselves. The head chief may know something of the Christian religion, but I will answer for it that nine-tenths of the rebels have no real ideas on the subject. It is sincerely to be hoped that the government will interfere at this time. C. G. GORDON, Major Commanding.

This, however, is but the cold account written for the newspaper. Sir Halliday's is more dramatic. He also notes how confused Chang looked when he came up; and at last, in answer to Gordon's eager question about the Wangs, said: "They did not come!" "They did not come! Why? How is that?" asked Gordon. "I saw them myself go out. They got off their horses and saluted me. And now you say they did not go?" "No—no—they did not come," repeated the other. He and Gordon were to meet again at midnight. Gordon did not come. In reality he had been taken prisoner for a time. Sir Halliday not meeting Gordon and being mystified, went to see Li. But he could not find him. Li, in terror for his life, had taken refuge in Sir Halliday's camp on the other side of the city, where he trusted Gordon would not look for him, and when at last found, he said: "Do tell Gordon I never meant to do it; I meant to keep my word as to their safe conduct, but when I saw those fellows come in with their hair long, the very sign of rebellion, and only wearing the white badge of submission in their button-holes, I thought it such insolence that anger overcame me, and I gave the order for their execution. But it was my doing, not Gordon's; my safe conduct not Gordon's that has been violated. Tell him I am ready to proclaim far and wide that he had nothing to do with it, so that he loses no reputation by it. Can you not make peace with him for me?"

When Dr. Macartney first found Gordon it was in his

bedroom, and Gordon seemed beside himself. He stooped down to his little camp bed behind the door and drew from under it a bleeding head, that of the La Wang, which the La Wang's son had given him, and holding it up, all gory as it was, at arm's length, and crying "Look! look!" he began to weep hysterically. There was no use in attempting to reason with him then, so, though it was in the night, Sir Halliday declared he had not come about anything particular, only just looked in in passing.

Next time he managed to see Gordon it was at breakfast. There sat Gordon amid a great company of Shanghai men, and he made Dr. Macartney sit down with them. All the richest of the Chinese were seeking refuge in Shanghai then, and foreign merchants were accused of letting them shanties and charging them for palaces—making so much money, says Sir Halliday, that they could not but wish the troubled state of things to continue, and they used to be always coming out to the camp to Gordon and inciting him on. Li had shown Macartney a letter in pencil which he had received from Gordon, written when he had first heard of the murder of the Wangs; he had asked to have this translated, but Macartney had excused himself; for in this note Gordon upbraided Li for his treachery, and called upon him to resign his position as governor into the hands of a Commission to be appointed by Gordon and his officers, until further directions could be received from Peking, adding that if Li would not do this he himself would leave the Imperialist side and go over to the Taipings, retaking for them every town he had taken from them. Li said if he did not know the contents of the letter he could not keep it, so gave it to Sir Halliday, who hastened to take it away, being desirous to hand it back to Gordon. But among a crowd of men all drinking and talking loud, the moment was unpropitious for discussing so grave a matter seriously as it deserved.

So when Gordon at table, all of a sudden, looked round and said: "I don't believe you came with no purpose in

particular. I believe you have some business on hand. Out with it!" Sir Halliday replied: "Afterwards, afterwards, Gordon." "No, now!" Then, looking round the table: "These are all my friends. I don't mind their hearing. You can speak quite freely before them." Then Sir Halliday, trying to pacify him, told him he had got his letter, and said solemnly, "Gordon, beware." But Gordon cried out that he would do all as he had said; and ordered two steamers to be got ready. In the end he started with his troops, but going half way repented and came back. Sir Halliday says he had warned him as impressively as he could of the awful consequences of carrying out the scheme he contemplated; how Sir Frederick Bruce, then British minister, and everyone else, would blame him. Doubtless Gordon reflected upon this and upon many other matters. But however much we may wish to admire him, it is impossible to think he was right both times—right in leaving Li's army and right in returning to it. There is no doubt that he went about for some days armed, with the intention of killing Li, and but for Macartney he would in all probability have carried out his intention. Among British merchants in China the general idea for years has been that it was a pity that Macartney ever interfered. But with every allowance for the edge given to Gordon's anger by his having himself been detained a prisoner in the barely yet captured city of Soochow, his own life certainly in danger, it does not seem, dispassionately judging the matter all these years afterwards, that Gordon would have had any right to take the matter into his own hands and try Li, much less summarily to condemn and execute him. The Wangs were traitors; they had just traitorously killed one of their own number; and according to ordinary Chinese opinion, Li behaved very cleverly, taking advantage of his opportunity, for they would have been sure to give trouble if allowed to live on. In any case, within three weeks Gordon was serving under him again on apparently perfectly friendly terms. He did not throw up his command and leave Li. This is the official version of the matter in an Imperial Edict of February 6th, 1864:—

Li Hung-chang has reported to us the attack upon Soochow, and the delivery up of the city by the rebels in consequence of their strength being exhausted. On perusing his memorial our joy was indeed great.

Soochow has been in possession of the rebels now for four years. The rebel fortifications outside the city were, it seems, first taken in succession by Li Hung-chang with his forces, and this so checked the courage of the rebels that they begged to surrender the city. On the 30th November last the (soi-disant) Chung-Wang, seeing that the city was in great danger from the impetuous attacks of the troops, and that there was much disaffection amongst the rebels, left the city by night with 1,000 of his followers, and gave special charge of the place to Mo-wang, with directions to hold it to the last.

On the 3rd of December General Chang and two other officers advanced with their forces and took up a position close to each gate, which they maintained day and night, gaining ground as each assault took place. Gordon also in person moved up to the foot of the wall and opened fire on the city. On the 4th the Mo-wang mounted the city wall to conduct the defence and, whilst in the act of delivering orders, was stabbed in an unguarded moment by an officer under the orders of a fictitious Wang. Over 1,000 of the Mo-wang's men were slain at the same time, and the city gates were opened. General Chang then entered the city and took control. Several thousand rebels were exterminated by him, a great many were cut off by Li-Chao-Pin, and finally Soochow was recovered.

We now desire that Li Hung-chang direct the troops to follow up their success by taking Chang-chow, and then by a combined movement sweep the rebels out of Nankin, and capture their chief, to the end that the river may be cleared of them.

It is further our desire that, in consideration of the services rendered by the Minister of State Tseng Kuo-fan, the board decide upon what merit is due to him.

Li Hung-chang, since entering upon the duties of Governor of Kiangsu, has devoted his whole attention to military operations, and his strategic movements have had perfect success. He has several times entered the rebel strongholds, and now that he has been so successful as to capture Soochow, he is still more deserving of praise.

We are, therefore, graciously pleased to bestow upon him the title of Guardian of the Heir-Apparent, and reward him with

a yellow jacket in token of our appreciation of his services, and we are likewise pleased to confer upon Chang the hereditary title of Yun-ch'i-wen, and reward him with a yellow jacket.

General Gordon, in his active co-operation, has shown forth extraordinary valour, and we therefore reward him with a first-class medal and the sum of ten thousand taels to evince our desire to encourage merit, etc. Respect this!

With his sovereign's approbation and his countrymen's admiration let us therefore now leave Li yellow-jacketed and guardian of the Heir-Apparent, satisfied that the indignant contempt of the few foreigners in China could not trouble him much one way or the other. Yet it must be remembered that it is this murder of the Wangs that has coloured every foreigner's opinion of him ever since, and that there are Chinese men, men in high place too, who have never done any such action and would be incapable of it. There is one other reflection that forces itself upon us. When the British Government allowed Gordon to serve under Li, when he put at Li's disposition all that went to the making up of that magnetic personality we call Gordon, did either realise that thereby Li Hung-chang (through merits not his own) was being lifted up and borne onward to the very highest place in the Chinese Empire? Thus the man, who bought rank by going security for General Chang, and obtained victory over the Taipings by treacherously murdering all their princes when they came to see him under a safe conduct granted by himself, was floated, as a syndicate is often floated, under false pretences. And it is the shareholders in one case, all the people of China in the other, who know the consequences. Up to this point in his life, so far as we know, Li Hung-chang had given no striking indication of personal bravery, but one or two to the contrary. The Chinese say that he was beaten in every battle till Gordon came to him. He had, however, shown discernment of character even among foreigners, shrewdness and business capacity, and finally that tendency to rise which seems inborn in certain characters, and without which all the talents and all the virtues are ineffective.

CHAPTER V.

THE END OF THE TAIPING REBELLION: LI, GORDON, AND CHANG (1863–4).

THE Shanghai paper of the time quotes the following Edict as evidence of Chinese duplicity:—

> Li Hung-chang reports that General Gordon some time since started from Li-yanghsien to attack Kin-tang. He carried with him mortars to breach the walls. At the attack he was wounded in the leg. Li has therefore recommended him to remain at rest. Such is the despatch. Now Gordon being excessively brave and fearless, was wounded in consequence. *We are on this account deeply moved.* On the other hand, we are informed that the wound is not serious. We order Li Hung-chang to visit Gordon and inquire for him daily, so as to keep his mind at rest, requesting him to wait until he shall be perfectly restored to health and strength. Respect this!

But is it not a little hard to conclude from this that the Chinese accused Gordon of malingering? A shade of difference in the translation would, it is true, quite alter the meaning. Even if the Chinese did suspect Gordon of dishonourable conduct, can they be blamed for it, considering with what sort of foreign employés they had hitherto been brought in contact, and considering also that to a Chinese General such conduct would seem only natural.

Each nation—nay, each class in a nation—seems to have certain virtues; and must own to certain failings which it condones. We English set little store by courtesy; good manners are not taught in our schools, and the English and American lower middle classes seem to have absolutely

no standard of manners. The Chinese have; they may fall short of their intentions, but they always know how they ought to behave. Whereas they have a general idea that it is stupid to tell the truth, that the man who does so is deficient in imagination or resources, and that to show brains you should deceive and *not* be found out. Their attitude may be a little too bluntly stated here, but there certainly is a good deal of evidence to show that a man telling the truth or showing natural emotion of any kind is considered lacking in polish. Hence that expressionlessness, as if one were surrounded by masked faces, which anyone living in a Chinese city finds so trying at first.

To remind the reader—doubtless at this time judging "good old Lie" somewhat harshly—of the difference in point of view, I will quote again from the *Peking Gazette* of April, 1864:—

Li Hung-chang has sent us a report as to the protection and aid afforded by a god to the city of Chin-kiang when it was seriously threatened by the rebels. We are requested to confer an additional honorific epithet on the god, and to rebuild his temple. Such is the substance of the despatch. The circumstances of the case are as follows:—Chin-kiang-fu, in the Province of Kiang-su, used to possess a temple dedicated to the worship of T'u T'i. The faithful there adored and presented offerings to the shade of Chang-hsien, who had been a minister under an emperor of the Tang dynasty. In the third year of Hsien-F'eng, this temple was accidentally burnt down. Now, during the first month of the first year of Our reign, although the rebels, when constantly spreading themselves round the city, were as constantly repulsed by the Imperialists, yet they subsequently collected in overwhelming numbers and utterly routed the mandarin troops. But the inhabitants of the city trusted implicitly to the protection of the deity; who proved himself equal to the occasion by extending his ægis over his worshippers, for the rebels incontinently took themselves off. It is on this ground that the Futai Li Hung-chang begs that an honorific epithet be bestowed on the god, and on this he also bases the claim to a temple.

Years afterwards at Tientsin Li Hung-chang startled his

European admirers by doing unexpected reverence to a small snake, and in 1877, during the great drought at Tientsin, he frequently besought the Dragon King to pour water on the thirsty earth, even bringing out a mystic iron tablet "said to possess the power of attracting rain to any district into which it was carried." The Europeans who are most astonished at all this are probably those who would have objected altogether to any effort to convert him to a higher faith. But men of the build and calibre of Li are probably never agnostics. There is something higher than themselves that they reverence, and that carries them forward. We may call it superstition if we please. But how much of what we call our own religion is not superstition, if Mme. de Staël's able distinction be accepted: "Superstition is related to this life, religion to the next; superstition allies itself to fatality, religion to virtue: it is by the vitality of earthly desires we become superstitious, and by the sacrifice of these desires that we become religious." If we accept this the Chinese people seem singularly destitute of religion; and with regard to Li himself, no one can doubt "the vitality of his earthly desires."

In 1864 he may be considered as having been at the beginning of his career so far as learning from foreigners went. Ten years later we cannot believe that he would have killed the Wangs. The story current as to their death is that they refused to kneel before him, claiming to be his equals. He "told his underlings to hamstring them, and when they fell he ordered them to be beheaded. There were nine in all. The Mo Wang had sixteen boy attendants, who were all killed; his palace was like a slaughter-house." People with a taste for bloodshed can certainly get enough of it in the Taiping rebellion. Even when the rival princes disputed among themselves for the supremacy in Nanking itself, the Northern Prince killed the Eastern Prince's followers —men, women, and children—20,000 in all. People, who would behave foolishly over seeing one head cut off, seldom pause to think what such a fact means—the ground soaked, the rivers choked, the dogs gorged, the stench and all the rest of it. Mr. Howard puts it forcibly as usual: "Two

weeks afterwards we stormed and captured their position, driving the rebels into the Imperialists' lines. 10,000 were taken prisoners; about 4,000, old men and boys, were stripped entirely naked and sent adrift; the others, about 6,000, were put in a large compound and beheaded. It was an awful sight to see Li Hung-chang's men hacking at them. The bodies of the eight foreigners taken by the rebels were found with their heads off and their bodies mutilated."

This was after Gordon and Li had become friendly again, Mr. (now Sir Robert) Hart having persuaded Gordon that he had judged Li too harshly. So Gordon had led his men to victory, and this was the outcome of it all. Certainly war is not a kid glove affair, but it is incredible that this was the highest use to which to put a hero-saint—to win victories for the Chinese Imperialists' forces, who acted after this fashion, and then unconditionally to hand the poor conquered nation over to the Manchu dynasty, from which the Taipings had sought to free it. They, poor people, were certainly imperfectly enough instructed in the doctrines of Christianity from the outset, and power and luxury not only had temptations for them, but also attracted to their side all the needy daredevils of China. But what was the Imperialist side that we should send our men to fight for them, and watch Li Hung-chang's men hacking 6,000 men to death, after turning 4,000 old men and boys out naked to perish? And these are small numbers compared to those that were often killed. Captain Roderick Dew, R.N., tells how in the great populous city of Ningpo he found not a living soul, and Mr. Archibald Little has often told me how, as a young man, he has ridden through large cities, and found only corpses. Mr. Howard also mentions a curious circumstance, again noticed in the last Boxer outbreak: it was a common thing for women to command bodies of soldiers in the rebel army. These women rode astride. In the Boxer outbreak by all accounts they were carried in sedan chairs, those I have myself seen having bound feet.

Here, however, are reports from Li himself:—

On April 20th the Imperial army made a successful attack on Kia-shing-fu, having surrounded the city by day and by night for a considerable time. More than one hundred chang of the wall had been battered down. On the 20th General Chang himself, leading the other officers and men, joined in the struggle, placing scaling ladders and ascending the wall. He was on that occasion grievously wounded. An officer named Liu Szu-chi, when advancing with his men, let fly a shell which burst in one of the rebel magazines and created immense confusion amongst the enemy. Another officer, by name Liu Ping-Chang, with others, each leading his own company, inspired by bravery set to work tearing up the stakes which had been placed in the city ditch, and subsequently advancing they effected an entrance by the south and east gates. The leader of the rebels, by name Miao Fa-shou, immediately collected the most determined of his followers to the number of many thousands, and kept up a resolute fight in the streets. The Imperial soldiery, with an utter contempt for death, forced their way on, *slaughtering as they went some five or six thousand men.* The rebels fled by the west gate. Chen Yu-sheng and Li Chao-ping with their followers, dividing their forces, met and exterminated the fugitives. *The rebels taken within the city were executed.* The *soi-disant* Ting Wang was killed by a cannon ball. The *soi-disant* Yung Wang was taken and beheaded, his head being subsequently hung up. Thus was Kia-shing-fu taken. This entire affair was excellently conducted. The general Chang was very severely wounded while attacking the city. Indeed, his noble and heroic soul led him to his fate.

On another occasion Li writes :—

"The dead bodies of the rebels strewed the streets and filled the creeks."

And again—

"Our soldiery surrounded the place and killed a countless number of the enemy."

To return to the *Peking Gazette* :—

The defenders of the stockade fled in the utmost confusion. Sixty or seventy thousand, casting away their weapons, surrendered at discretion. Those old offenders who hid themselves in different

holes and corners within the city were ferreted out and in like manner exterminated. The Tien-tsian-fei was taken alive. From one o'clock until six the work of slaughter went on, and Changchow was taken at last. The operations were indeed most successful. In the affair Li Hung-chang led the soldiers in person, and vigorously cut down whole battalions of the enemy, finally succeeding in capturing this strongly fortified city. His strategic skill is very great, and we therefore repose the greatest confidence in him, and confer on his descendants to the last generation the hereditary rank of honorary Taotai. Several others, being each and all pre-eminent for bravery, contempt for death, and a generous emulation, are invested with the yellow jacket as a reward for their merits.

Here follows a long list, with this special mention of Gordon :—

Gordon, the Commander-in-Chief in the province of Kiangsu, as a leader of soldiers, assisted us in destroying the Rebels, and was continually in action. On this occasion he, with Li Hung-chang, attacked and subdued Changchow in a manner most extraordinary. He is, therefore, promoted to the rank of Ti-t'u. Moreover, in accordance with Li Hung-chang's request, we present him with a banner and a star in order to mark our high appreciation of his services. We await the settlement of the affairs of the "Ever Victorious Army," which, when reported to us by Li Hung-chang, will elicit a generous mark of our favour.

Yet the feeling among Europeans was that not enough credit was given to Gordon; this, perhaps, may be confirmed by comparing the style in which Li wrote of General Chang, the one who had been a rebel, and whose men fired upon Gordon's men "by mistake" at first :—

Chang [here follow his titles] fiercely attacked the city of Kiashing, where he was wounded in the head by a ball which pierced his brain. I over and over again exhorted him to submit to treatment, and I called in doctors who professed to cure both internal and external maladies, so that he at last consented to put himself in their hands. His mind and speech thus soon became clear. I left Soochow on the 7th April for the purpose of following up the rebels, but at the moment of starting I visited him. He said that

although the rebels had been defeated, their strength was still not to be despised, and he told me to order the officers to be careful in battle. He also remarked that brave men were not easily obtained, and bitterly regretted his own fate by which he was prevented from following up his duty to the country in exterminating the rebels. He sobbed and sighed and tears came into his eyes while he was speaking to me. I, on the other hand, bid him be of good courage, told him that he would thus hasten his recovery, and that it was not necessary for him to grieve and be anxious. While I was at Kiang-yin attacking the rebels there, a report suddenly reached me that Chang was gradually sinking.

(Here follow medical details.)

On the 14th April he called his servant and ordered him to bring the yellow jacket presented to him by your Majesty, and to assist him to put it on. He then bowed his head towards your Majesty's palace. He was much moved, and wept. He ordered Han Chu, a Chi-chao, who had the superintendence of the camp, to mount a horse and come to me, to beg that I would carefully follow out my design of destroying the rebels. He further said that he knew he could not see me again in the provincial city. Indeed, there was not a particle of selfishness in his recommendations. At the time when he felt death approaching he bemoaned the unfinished state of the work he had cut out for himself. He felt that he had not returned the favours heaped on him by your Majesty. On the 15th April, at twelve o'clock at night, he died. I was excessively grieved. All the military officers wept bitterly. Every one, whether belonging to Kiangsu or to Chêkiang, whether mandarins or scholars or common people, lamented his death. I then examined into Chang's previous history and discovered that he came from a place in An-hui, whence during the Rebel troubles he was taken as a prisoner. The "four-eyed dog" Ying placed great confidence in him. Chang, because he saw that the Rebels oppressed the people, at length made an attempt to get away from them. The Rebels, however, managed to secure him again, and shut him up so that he could not escape. Chang came over to the camp and surrendered himself. He was instantly recognised as a superior man, and one far above the general run of Rebel officers who had come over to our ranks. He was therefore appointed to a command in the camp, and was sent with the expedition which recovered

Nganking, and his bravery was there most conspicuous. The Governor-General, Tsêng Kuo-fan, reported the affair to your Majesty, and pledged himself for Chang's worth. At the same time I myself was at Nganking and constantly heard of Chang's exploits, as well as of his wisdom, daring, and varied ability.

Shortly afterwards, when your Majesty ordered me to hurry to Shanghai, I begged Tsêng Kuo-fan to allow me to carry with me Chang's two camps. The Governor-General and Tsêng Kuo-tsuan, seeing that I was in urgent need of assistance in the dangerous region to which I was going, granted my request. In the third month of the first year of your Majesty's reign, I started with Chang for Shanghai. In the fifth month we conquered at the battle of Hung Kiao, in the eighth month we routed the enemy at Pi Sin King, in the tenth month we were equally successful at Szu Kiang Kow, having in these three engagements rendered a satistory account of at least ten thousand rebels, and destroyed the prestige of the movement. It was, in truth, Chang's strategic ability which brought about this result. From that time the confidence of our troops was restored. Gradually Chang picked out about ten thousand men, and disciplined them carefully. Thenceforward he had only to attack a city in order to ensure its conquest. Thus we regained possession of Ching-poo, Kad-ding, Tai-tsan, Chên-yang, Quin-san, Sin-yang, Wu-kong and Chen-tzei, all of which were either *chous* or *hsiens* [cities of a certain rank]. In the seventh month of the second year of your Majesty's reign, we commenced the attack on Soochow, which was the very centre of the rebellion. The city was large and provisions plentiful, while, on the other hand, forty thousand men could hardly have invested it on all sides. Chang employed only ten thousand men—this included both the naval and military forces—and having taken up his position outside the Lo-mên, gradually pushed the siege. It mattered not how strongly fortified places were, whether protected by camps or by stone stockades, he took them one after another, and established camps of his own in each. Twice he divided his force into two battalions, and sent them to fight in different directions. On one of these occasions the Kashing rebels came to the assistance of Soochow. Chang advanced to Ping Wang, met them there and routed them. When the Rebel who styled himself Chung (Sincere) advanced to the relief, Chang aided in the repulse which befel the Rebels at Ta-chiao-ko and Wang-ting. The

Huchow rebels who endeavoured to relieve Soochow were also by assistance driven back. For eighteen or twenty miles in every direction round the old camp ambushes were laid into the very heart of the enemy's country. The Rebels were fully convinced that he was in truth a Heavenly warrior. When I reported the capture of Soochow I informed your Majesty that Chang acted like one supernaturally inspired. For "every move on the board" he was prepared, and this indeed his conduct fully proved.

This despatch of Li's is well worth studying, both because of the insight it gives into Chinese ways, so frequently recording sighs and tears, and because of the qualities which he specially selects to praise—"strategic ability," being "a superior man," "like one supernaturally inspired," further "that there was not a particle of selfishness in his recommendations." Chang seems to have died like Rhodes, lamenting "so much to do, so little done." But above all it is to be noticed that in this despatch everything that we are accustomed to consider Gordon's work, Gordon's claim to fame in China, is attributed to Chang, and Gordon left unmentioned, as if he did not exist. Which is quite in accordance with Chinese usage to this day.

The Chinese, whose education is confined to a study of their own classics and the acquiring of a good literary style, are often quite unaware that there are other nations in the world besides themselves. It is not that they think they are the finest nation, as we all do, every one of us, if we tell the hidden secrets of our hearts, but that they believe there are no others; only border tribes, sometimes turbulent, with wild sort of chieftains over them; who come to China, either because they have no land and are weary of living always on the sea, or because theirs are such poverty-stricken districts that there is no tea there, no silk, no sunshine to ripen anything. Therefore we come as suppliants to China, begging of them to trade with us and let us have some of their good things; and then in a turbulent fashion force them to take our opium or the like in exchange. It is very difficult for the arrogant nations of Europe to believe this. But so it is, and probably Li Hung-chang at this period of his life was not much better

informed than Chinese generally. In any case, it would have been daring of him to try to force anything of this knowledge, if he had acquired it, upon his Emperor. He seems to have had the power of recognising a good man when he saw him, but he had been from the first very cautious to keep in check the pretensions of the foreign mercenaries he employed. He had refused the offers of Russia, he had got Burgevine dismissed. Some people think he must have been very much impressed by Gordon's disinterestedness, because the latter, when Imperial presents were sent him after the capture of Soochow, refused to accept them. But as Gordon, being still full of righteous anger over the murder of the Wangs, took the celebrated walking-stick, with which he always went into battle, and with it roundly beat the Imperial messengers, who had entered with all the state and dignity befitting the bringing of the Emperor's gifts, it is hard to see how this should lead Li to suppose that Gordon came of a cultured, polished race. He might, perhaps, have admired the refusal to accept 10,000 taels, though he would be more apt to consider it the caprice of a man who did not understand the value of money; but the beating must have confirmed him in the idea that he had a lot of wild desperadoes to deal with, and that the sooner they were disbanded the better.

Nanking was now the only city holding out, and so—very carefully furnished with means to return to their foreign homes, lest they should take service with the rebels—the "Ever Victorious Army," as it had been called from the days of Ward, was disbanded, and we read in the *Peking Gazette*, 16th June, 1864 :—

Since the spring of last year Gordon has headed the "Ever Victorious Army," and aided the ordinary Imperial forces in the subjugation of Fushan, the relief of Chang-shu-hsien, the capture of Taitsan-chou, Quin-san-hsien, Wu-kong-hsien, and Soochow. Then again, he this year captured Yih-shing-hsien and Li-yang-hsien, while he compelled the retreat of the rebels at Yang-shai. He finally captured Chang-chow-fu, thus continually heaping meritorious acts one upon another. Moreover, he has, in the most

satisfactory and peaceful manner, completed the disbandment of the disciplined army. There was no vacillation about Gordon's services; he was ever inspired with that bravery and strategic talent which enabled him to prove so formidable. He was also intimately acquainted with the relations existing between China and other Powers. It is therefore most necessary for us to mark our approval. Gordon is, therefore, presented with the Yellow Jacket, and a short peacock's feather. He is also presented with the official robes and paraphernalia belonging to the rank of Commander-in-Chief. Thus will our favour be manifested to him.

It was really not Li's fault that Gordon had no further reward, for he had refused money, and the Yellow Jacket was a very high honour. The other foreign officers got from £500 to £1,000, according to their rank. Foreigners were, however, not yet quite done with. The arsenal established under Dr. Macartney at Soochow was removed to Nanking, and the Lay-Osborne flotilla had still to be got rid of. Horatio Lay, the founder of the Chinese Maritime Customs, hearing that the Chinese Government required "armed vessels to be officered and manned by Englishmen," had engaged Captain Sherard Osborne to command the fleet. On its arrival at Shanghai, Li tried to get all the men to desert to his Provincial fleet, and by offers of higher pay "nearly all the stokers from one ship were tempted into joining his gunboats," so that "Captain Osborne was glad to steam northwards, in order to carry his men out of the reach of temptation." However, he was then told that he would have to serve under Li Hung-chang instead of direct under the Emperor. Sir Frederick Bruce had written to Prince Kung in the strongest terms about Li's conduct to Gordon, and General Brown had taken the same view, and now Captain Sherard Osborne wrote several very outspoken letters to the effect that it was impossible for any British officer of standing to serve under Li Hung-chang. "The flotilla was never commissioned," writes Mr. Michie in "The Englishman in China," which purports to be a biography of Sir Rutherford Alcock, but is really a detailed yet dramatic description of contemporaneous events in the Far

East, rendered yet more interesting by the grand literary style of the writer. He knew Li Hung-chang well, and wrote of him as a warm personal friend in his obituary notice, therefore it is the more interesting to notice that he adds: "The whole chapter of experiences of the campaign in Kiangsu has left a vivid impression in the mind of Li Hung-chang; it was the most interesting period of his life, but no incident of it imparts such vivacity to his reminiscences as that of the Lay-Osborne fleet. Nothing warms him to dramatic locution like a reference to that episode;" and again it was "the uncompromising attitude of Li Hung-chang" that "smashed the flotilla scheme." "Burgevine was fresh in the Futai's mind—was indeed at that very time in the rebel camp near him. Li's arguments clinched the matter."

There were still 10,000 Russian rifles and several cannon, that turned up at Peking "after a protracted journey at a time when the Russian Minister deemed it expedient to explain to his British colleagues that the arms had reference only to the rebellion." We do not quite know how this was explained to the Chinese, who had long before declined Russian aid, so that it might have been possible one would think to stop all this artillery before it arrived. Anyway, Li Hung-chang had disbanded the foreign mercenaries, and rejected the fleet, much as in after years he obliged Admiral Lang to resign the command of the Northern Squadron. Is it unnatural, then, that he should be held in some measure responsible for the great naval defeat of Yalu and the capture of the Chinese Navy by the Japanese?

However, in 1864 he was borne forward on the full tide of victory, and on July 19th the Taiping rebellion came to an end through the fall of Nanking, without any further aid from foreigners, Li getting royal presents and the title which we translate as Earl, together with the double-eyed peacock's feather; his chief, the celebrated Tsêng Kwo-fan, receiving the title we translate as Marquis Tsêng.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE TAIPING REBELLION (1864–1868).

To the interval of peace which followed belongs the tale, how Li and a number of high officials were invited to witness the performances of a planing machine, which for beautiful simplicity of construction could hardly be excelled, so experts say. Twice or thrice the operation was performed. Without showing the slightest interest, or even making one intelligent inquiry, they shrugged their shoulders, and with one voice exclaiming "There's a devil in it," turned to examine with the same idle and undiscerning curiosity some other piece of mechanism. Yet it is worth considering who are the stupid ones, we who exhibit with much pains the last marvellous achievement of mechanical genius to these Easterns, or they who, confronted with something of which they do not understand the first rudiments, turn away to wax enthusiastic over a display of fireworks or an amusing toy. No one would take a European child who had not even heard of the lever, and think to enlighten him by taking him over great electrical works. Eastern Potentates often know as little about mechanics as European children; but they may understand many things we do not, all the same, such as diplomacy or harmony of colours.

It would be a comfort at once to pass from those dark times that have left an ineffaceable trace upon many once-flourishing Chinese cities. But those rebels, who with their long hair were so often taken at first sight for women by their enemies, who had aimed at a great peace and made of the smiling plains of China a great desert, had not all

been killed, and were soon to reappear in the Provinces of Shan-tung (East of the Mountains) and Ho-nan (South of the River). Whereupon there ensued a political game of which we can at least understand the moves, and see that to his boldness at this juncture Li owed much of his subsequent success.

Among the players in the aforesaid game were Tsêng Kwo-fan and Li Hung-chang, one generalissimo of the Emperor's armies, the other governor of three of his richest provinces. Li owed to Tsêng Kwo-fan his appointment as Governor of Kiangsu and his subsequent promotion, in succession to his patron, to the governor-generalship of Kiang-su, Kiangsi, and Anhui—in defiance of one of the laws of the empire which rules that no man can hold office in or over his native province. Now, on a Minister of State becoming seriously ill, Tsêng Kwo-fan was ordered to Peking to act in his stead, while Li was invited again to succeed his patron as Commander-in-Chief. It seemed like promotion, but Chinese officials in high place are very wary about going to Peking. Again and again in these later years has Chang Chih-tung been summoned thither, and yet always found some pretext to avoid compliance. Once after innumerable delays he had actually got as far as Shanghai when a little anti-foreign disturbance occurring in his viceroyalty he actually found it necessary to hurry back at once with a speed very different from the exceeding slowness with which he had prepared, moved off, and descended the river. And that is the only time that he has even got ready to go.

In this case the Court was evidently afraid of Tsêng Kwo-fan's power becoming too great, just as Li had been afraid of his foreign mercenaries. A victorious general at the head of his army has always been reckoned difficult to deal with. Nanking became alive with troops, camped round it in the most favourable positions to command the river Yangtse, whilst the artillery was held ready for action at a moment's notice. Foreigners became convinced "that Li contemplated the insane folly of armed resistance to a foreign force in some possible eventuality." The quantity of

warlike stores which Li had accumulated, and the facilities his arsenals afforded him for reproducing them, they said, were too much for him; he was yearning for an opportunity to try the effect of these foreign engines of destruction. A Shanghai paper began to utter words of warning.

> Li has doubtless been longing to see how his foreign-drilled troops will act. From the expense incurred in providing them with European instructors, he has a right to expect men whom two years' drill has reduced to a fair state of discipline, whereas he will hardly find a tithe who have served more than a few months. Month after month, as soon as the muster has been taken and certified to by the inspecting officer, as many as twenty per cent. of the men have been discharged, in order that the officer commanding them may pocket their pay. A few days before the next muster, the battalion is made up again to the strength of the pay roll, again to be cut down as soon as the inspection is over. The new comer is taken on with the understanding that he is to receive no pay, not only for the remainder of the current month, but during the next also. Had the rebels known better how to use foreigners, and the real value of foreign intelligence, their flag might have floated to this hour over the walls of Nanking. But the revelations of those who have left them show that foreigners were regarded rather as ferocious animals, which must be kept chained up and only let loose on the enemy when wanted to fight. It is a pity that Macartney, or some other of the foreign officers in his service, does not warn Li of his danger.

The Viceroy, who was also, it must be remembered, Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, had appointed Macartney to act in conjunction with the Fu of Nanking, in conducting any negotiations that might arise pending his absence in Shantung. This appointment of a foreigner to aid in carrying out the treaty regarding foreigners was considered to indicate liberality on Li's part.

Everyone at that time was full of the idea that Tsêng and Li together could become masters of Central China, and whether concocted by the Imperial Government or by the provincial authorities themselves, it was supposed to be a counter plot against these two powerful men when the Viceroys of Fukien and Chê-kiang, and Kwangtung and

Kwangsi, agreed to club funds for the construction at Foochow of a foundry and dockyard, which should place not only guns but gunboats at their disposal. About 3,000,000 taels was the estimated outlay. Two Frenchmen were at the head of the scheme, and purposed to carry it out with the aid of skilled foreign labour; ten gunboats to be built, and the Chinese to be instructed in working them during a period of six years, at the conclusion of which it was assumed that they would be able to do without foreign superintendence. There was no reason why these Frenchmen, aided by European workmen, should not attain the same success which Macartney earned at Soochow. But that every foreigner concerned would disinterestedly retire at the end of six years, or that the Chinese would be able to dispense with their aid, was in the highest degree improbable. And, as we all know, the French are there yet, though in 1900 the poor Viceroy of Fukien was trying to send them away on the plea of "too much expense," and of Fukien not wanting an arsenal. Then a French admiral called, and one or two French men-of-war lay off the arsenal for months, nominally requiring repairs, and the Fukien Viceroy had to give way.

The upshot was that at length Li determined on the movement against the Honan and Shantung Nienfei, to which Tsêng Kwo-fan had so frequently urged him, and left Nanking for the seat of war; Li from the south, Tsêng Kwo-fan from the east, and another Imperialist force from the north-west—by which it was hoped to surround and effectually crush the rebels. And it seemed then as if Li had not moved sooner in order that it might be made clear to the world that Tsêng alone could not crush the rebels, and that the glory when he overcame should be Li's, not Tsêng's.

And so before Kitchener had ever invented the term, or it had even been heard of, came about the great drive of the Nienfei, during which the Chinese experienced the same difficulty as the English in the Transvaal; their infantry being unable to get up with the light rebel cavalry, who were always able to keep a day or two in advance.

A private letter from the headquarters in Shantung province, dated July 5, 1867, will give a better description of the situation than any that can now be composed:

I had not joined headquarters three days (about seven weeks ago) before Li put the whole army in motion, driving the rebels back through Honan. We pursued them for twelve days, but could not entirely overtake them, as they have not the impedimenta of a regular force and are able to move faster than us. Li marched at the head of his men night and day, and we have at last driven them into Shantung and holed them within 40 li of the seaboard. He has sent to Nanking to get the steamers round to the promontory to shell their camps, and has set the whole army to build fortifications or a wall around them to assist in preventing their escape; there are some 30,000 to 50,000 I think. All along the track of the Nienfei through Honan the sight was heartrending; all the villages and hamlets lying in ruins, fields untilled and uncultivated, nothing but broken bricks and the devastating marks of fire. The cities were crowded with country people, but they had not suffered much save from the scarcity of food, and without exaggeration I may safely say that the whole population infinitely prefer Mandarin rule to Nienfei rapacity, notwithstanding what some rebel-loving people may say and imagine to the contrary. I do not think there are any foreigners with those robbers; they must have tired of the chase long ago.

The rebels appear to have "crossed from Honan, forded the Grand Canal, proceeded towards Tsi-nan-fu, which they beleaguered for about a week, and then, the Imperialists coming up, spread eastwards, pursued by Li's troops, who were hemming them in towards the south-east portion of Shantung promontory. Li was pursuing the rebels with 40,000 men, and had a cordon of forts stretching across the country."

In addition to the wall already built he had constructed a ditch or dyke 100 miles in length, said to have been made by his army in the short space of ten days. The rebels were now in the extreme portion of the peninsula, and the Imperialist army meant to keep them there till they surrendered.

The wall was guarded by a series of camps containing each 500 men, about a mile distant from one another.

There were 60,000 men employed in the building of this wall, and the force of rebels enclosed within was estimated at 80,000 men. The rebels had made several unsuccessful attacks on the wall, and their position within it was rendered uncomfortable by the growing discontent of the peasantry, whose grain they were rapidly consuming. Six thousand of the rebels had actually surrendered, and it was expected that if the Imperialists could have held them for ten days longer enclosed the whole force would have come over. Li, aware of the great crisis which was at hand, was now hastening up from Honan by almost superhuman marches. He was anxious to see the result of his great scheme of hemming them in, and to be himself in at the death. The right flank was in the keeping of a mandarin of the Shantung province, named Wang. This man, contrary to orders, weakened his line by doubling the number of his camps, into which he put 250 men each. The rebel spies found this out, and further, that Wang's troops were armed with old guns and munitions of war. Determined by this information, they made two false attacks on the mandarin guarding the line to the left, and a real attack on Wang himself, which ended in their getting out; in consequence of which, fifteen days afterwards, Wang hanged himself.

Li, finding his great plan thus made a failure, withdrew to the west bank of the canal, leaving only two flying columns to follow the enemy's movements. Both these columns were defeated, losing 10 guns and 2,400 men, including 700 cavalry, "through the egregious blunder of retiring the guns, after having repelled an attack, while the rebels were still near. The latter, seeing the guns limbered up, halted in their retreat and came down on them before they could be got ready for action. The officers were, of course, the first to run, and the men soon followed, except four who remained by the guns with three Europeans. The rebels speared one of the Europeans slightly, left the others alone, and carried off the guns in triumph. On the 20th of the same month 300 more cavalry and 200 infantry were lost."

Thus Li's extremely cautious method of carrying on warfare by walling the enemy in resulted in as utter a failure as the most rash daring could have brought about; nor, judging by this specimen, can he by any means be considered to have shown signal gallantry as a general. His successes against the Taiping rebels, on the fame of which all his subsequent career was based, may thus very fairly be rather attributed to General Chang, to whom Li himself, as before shown, attributed most of the credit in his report to the throne, or to General Gordon, as the English are in the habit of doing. It must, however, be borne in mind that Li was not a military mandarin, only a learned man, according to Chinese usage thought fit for anything, by reason of his learning, from starting a candle factory to commanding an army; and that he might therefore be expected rather to shine in strategical combinations than in brilliant deeds of daring. He was also working under the anything but cheering influence of the following message from Peking:—

We now command that Tsêng Kwo-fan, Governor of Hu-peh, be deprived of his official button, and that, in company with Li Huo-nien, Governor of Ho-nan, his punishment be before all other adjudged by the Board, that all may know the lightness of the sentence hereby awarded.

We also command Li Hung-chang strictly to inquire into and report to the Throne the names of the several officers who by their feeble opposition allowed the rebels to escape them.

With regard to Li Hung-chang himself, the officer especially commissioned to superintend the operations directed against the Nienfei, inasmuch as over half a year has elapsed without any sensible advantage resulting from his generalship, he has certainly abused the trust reposed in him by his Sovereign. We therefore order him, in expiation of the present disgrace, to win renown for himself by at once taking active command of the troops, and leading them into Shan-tung, where, in conjunction with others, he must scour the country and stamp out the smallest spark of rebellion existing there.

Next there ensued a race for the Grand Canal, which Li succeeded in reaching first and still held towards the close

of 1867, thus preventing the escape of the Nienfei, at least over the borders of the province. At the same time his deficiency in cavalry still placed him at a great disadvantage either in pursuit or in action. A series of engagements ensued, after which, to quote from the *Peking Gazette* (not always, however, a guide quite to be relied upon, especially with regard to rebels):—

The Nienfei, being scattered for the night in different places, were surrounded, and many of the houses they were sleeping in destroyed. They rapidly mustered in a body and prepared to give battle. Various detachments of the Imperial army coming up at the time, a general onslaught was made, during which the Imperial troops kept up an incessant firing "like rain," till the enemy retreated eastward. Following them by torchlight and falling upon them again at daybreak, they completely routed the whole body. The number killed or taken prisoners amounted to between 3,000 and 4,000 men, while the spoil in the shape of weapons, horses, etc., was immense. Forty rebel chiefs were killed. The remnant of the body then retired towards the N.E. The country people who had been carried off by the Nienfei, and returned quietly to their homes upon finding themselves at liberty, numbered about 10,000.

Yet in April, 1868, we find a foreign correspondent writing from Tientsin: "For six days past numbers of dead human beings, men, women, and children, have floated past this settlement down the river without any clothes on them. . . . The dogs are to be seen in several places betwen here and Taku lying beside the bodies, gorged." This might have served for a description of the same scene in the summer of 1900, when the fat dogs were again a feature that specially struck correspondents; they are generally so thin in China. And again:—

Yesterday evening, we learnt that a force of 20,000 men of Li Hung-chang's army had arrived at Tientsin early in the day. With this force there are two foreigners employed by Li Hung-chang with the artillery corps, and on these men reaching Tientsin and finding people here whom they knew when serving under Major Gordon, the following news regarding the Nienfei rebels,

which dwarfs all previous accounts completely, has been received by us.

That they number 80,000 fighting men and are all mounted, as well *as the women who accompany them;* that they are capable of going anywhere in China or of doing anything in it, so far as regards being hindered by the Imperial forces; that Li Hung-chang's army has hitherto not been able to cope with them, and so far as putting down the rebels it may be compared to a paper army; and that at present there are no signs of the country being placed in tranquillity through the Imperial forces.

But it was agreed to consider the Nienfei rebellion subdued; and when that is the case in China any further outbreak is handled under a different name, which makes it, of course, quite a different rebellion; so Li was directed to turn his arms against the Mahomedan rebels of the north-west, who were threatening an invasion of Shansi. The Mahomedans seem to have concluded an alliance with the Honan Nienfei, and burst across Shansi into Chihli, at the same time that the latter entered these provinces from the south. Frequent engagements had taken place between them and the Imperialists, who had been quite unable, so far, to overcome them. Large bodies of troops, however, were massed, and an Imperial edict disgraced several high officers for not preventing the irruption. The foreign residents at Tientsin formed themselves into a volunteer corps for the defence of the settlement, in case of emergency; and the ramparts of the city were put in order, although, "the Imperialist forces being between Tientsin and Pao-ting, the rebel headquarters, no immediate danger seemed to threaten."

Poor foreign residents! always in the wrong whatever happens. When they tried to warn Sir Claude Macdonald, the British Minister in 1900, almost the same words were used, "no immediate danger seemed to threaten." Yet in 1870 came the awful Tientsin Massacre, and in 1900 the killing of all the foreigners the Chinese could get hold of in the Provinces of Chihli and Shansi and a part of Shantung. Of late it is the Germans who have supplied

the great bulk of the arms used by Chinese, although Armstrong and others have done what they could in that way. It is a little interesting to note that formerly it was the German missionary Père Virbiest who engaged in this work, baptising the ordnance, and giving each the name of some saint. Even on the borders of Yunnan, in the extreme West and South of China, men have told me they have themselves seen Chinese cannon marked with the sign of the cross, showing their Jesuit origin. The Emperor Tao Kwang was quite as pious. He deputed his son-in-law to sacrifice to certain cannon, and appointed seven other officers to sacrifice to certain "red-coated cannon."

In Soochow, the principal city of Li's late Province of Kiang-su, it was reported that Li Hung-chang was so much disgusted at the treatment he had met with that he intended to throw up office and retire into private life, as soon as his campaign against the Northern rebels had ended. Naturally, while he and Tsêng Kwo-fan were engaged at a distance subduing their country's rebels their own enemies were free to cabal against them in Peking. There were rumours that the Tartar cavalry had been called on to aid in suppressing the Northern Nienfei, that a Tartar General had been placed in command of the Imperial army, and that Li Hung-chang and Tsêng Kwo-fan were to be deprived of their commands and sent back to their respective viceroyalties. The intention of relegating these two chiefs to their civil stations was not carried out. Though viewing Li for the moment with anger and suspicion, the Court seemed obliged to tolerate him. He was, however, degraded three steps in nominal rank.

Li, in fact, had actually refused to give up the seals of his viceroyalty to anyone but his patron Tsêng Kwo-fan; the latter at the same time declining to venture himself in Peking, when ordered to take his post at the Board of War. Not satisfied with this act of insubordination, Li had committed another far less explicable. Immediately after the New Year he coolly went off on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Confucius, and was away for five days, whilst frantic appeals were being

made to him to defend the capital and the sacred tombs of the Imperial family, within sight of which the rebels were then said to be encamped. Li was at that time being ordered into Chihli, and steadfastly refusing to move out of the province of Shantung. It will probably never now be possible to receive an authentic record of what prompted this pilgrimage. Was it cowardice before armed rebels? Was it audacity against secret enemies? Was it religious feeling? Of one thing, however, we may, I think, feel certain, that it was a diplomatic move of some kind. Very early in life a Chinese official learns the enormous value of knowing how to wait.

So on September 5th we find Li again restored to all the honours of which he had been deprived. By the autumn Tsêng Kwo-fan was willing and ready to assume the Viceroyalty of Chihli, and Li consented to go up for audience at Peking before proceeding to his post as Governor-General of Hunan and Hupei. Before taking up his appointment at Wuchang he also arranged to spend a few months with his family at Anhui. For, though we have heard little of them, to his family Li was a very affectionate father and grandfather, although somewhat stern in his treatment of his sons, according to foreign ideas. He is also invariably described as an attached husband, and that he had the usual Chinese devotion to his somewhat remarkable mother there is no reason to doubt. It was probably to see her that this visit was planned.

After all the horrors of the Taiping rebellion, a touch of comedy brings relief; and so before passing to the next phase of Li's career, we may here briefly relate the episode of the Burlingame Mission:—

On Mr. Burlingame going to take his *congé* of the Chinese Ministers of the Tsungli-Yamên, before retiring from his post as Minister for the United States of America and returning home to resume political life there, and while he and they were talking about Chinese affairs, Prince Kung made the polite remark, "Now, why cannot you, when you are again in the West, represent our views of what is taking place in China, and of what we would wish to have done in our

country?" Mr. Burlingame replied, "Should I visit any of the Courts of Europe I shall have much pleasure in doing so." Whether he took a polite speech somewhat literally, or whether Prince Kung meant more than he said, Mr. Burlingame is said to have presently received a proposition that he should be the Chinese ambassador at the foreign Courts in Europe and America, and to have accepted the post. Two mandarins—one a Manchu and the other a Chinese, said to be able, intelligent men—were attached to the mission, Mr. Leavy Brown, of H.B.M.'s Legation, and Mr. Deschamps, of the Maritime Customs, being appointed attachés. And Mr. Burlingame, late U.S. Minister to China, set forth to the various Courts of Europe to—one would think—somewhat misrepresent the Chinese mind. For how could he represent it correctly? A further touch of comedy is added by the whole party with their escort—four of the British Legation guard—being blockaded, as they said, by a body of rebels half-way between Peking and Tientsin. Then Lieutenant Dunlop, of H.M.'s gunboat *Dove*, with twenty bluejackets, and a detachment of native-drilled cavalry, at once went up to their rescue, and the U.S. sloop *Ashuelot* left Tientsin directly the news arrived. But nothing could be seen or heard of the besiegers. An additional comic touch!

It is always the Chinese usage to employ middlemen in all transactions, whether in arranging a marriage or a business transaction; and a man who has had as large and varied experience in dealing with Chinese as probably any Englishman says the way in which British Ministers and others in high place have insisted on going direct to highly placed Chinese officials to talk matters over with them, demanding, even—as sometimes—insisting, upon seeing Imperial princes, is a great mistake from beginning to end. These last often could not understand the interpreters, and, if they did, could not possibly make up their minds with regard to any question on the spur of the moment. Even if they did, their answer would only be their own individual answer, not that of their office or Yamên. Every important business ought, he con-

tended, to be thoroughly thrashed out by subordinate intermediaries, and no call ought to be made upon anyone of the position of a prince until everything was virtually settled and only required ratification. Sir Robert Hart is known to have always followed this method, and indeed, up to this day, never goes to pay a visit himself unless sent for. China may in 1868 be said to have tried to inaugurate this system of intermediaries both through the Burlingame Mission and through Sir Robert Hart himself, then Mr. Hart, who was now in Mr. H. N. Lay's place at the head of that Chinese Maritime Customs which Lay founded and Hart so greatly developed. With reference to both, the warning in a leading article of the *North China Herald* of 1868 may be found valuable even now. If it had been taken to heart in the past, the whole course of events would probably have been absolutely different in the Far East:—

> With the best intentions in the world, he (Mr. Hart) cannot help militating against foreign interests, by the mere necessity under which he will find himself of answering questions. If an attempt is made to extract any of the concessions asked by the various memorials that have been presented to H.B.M. Minister, the Chinese will, of course, object. Their very natural, though unfounded, fears of discontent and outbreak will impel them to urge the stereotyped plea for more time. If pressure is put on, they will at once appeal to Mr. Hart—who is a noted supporter of the gradual progress theory—for advice. To him they will put the crucial question, What have they to fear in the event of non-compliance? Will foreigners insist by force of arms, if they refuse to construct railways, if they reject steamers from their inland waters, and foreign traders from their large cities? The reply must be in the negative. Foreigners will be angry, no doubt, Mr. Hart must tell them, and will express themselves strongly; but they will not fight.

It is England that has suffered most from this disadvantage, for Mr. Hart, being an Englishman, would be understood to be better informed about English counsels than those of other nations, and to speak more authoritatively about them. And many a British Minister must

have felt powerless to assume that swelling port and awe-inspiring manner that render unnecessary all recourse to action, owing to the inward conviction that an Englishman, far better supplied with secret service money than himself, was at the command of the Chinese Government, always ready to tell them what the British Government's difficulties were, and what its real intentions. How can you play whist with your opponent's employé looking over your hand all the time, and telling him confidentially you do not hold trumps? What shows Sir Robert Hart's infinite subtilty of mind and adaptability is that he has been able to retain his post of Inspector-General of Chinese Maritime Customs all these years to the apparent satisfaction of everyone concerned. The Burlingame Mission soon came to an end, and is now chiefly remembered by its leader's public declaration that: "China invites Protestant missionaries to plant the shining Cross on every hill and valley;" a fine sentence that must at the time have given much pleasure—and rightly so—in the United States, but which leads people of certain temperaments to form so stern a judgment of the speaker that I refrain from touching further on this episode. Here it will be enough to say that Mr. Burlingame succeeded in persuading Lord Clarendon "to discard all the information that ever reached the Foreign Offices from its own responsible agents in China—men who were bound by every consideration of loyalty and public duty to report only what was true—and to accept instead thereof the protestations of an agent hired to make out a case."

Li on arriving at Peking would hear all about the Burlingame Mission, the supposed attack upon it, the missing assailants, and finally the never to be forgotten "shining Cross" statement, and as Li greatly loved a joke and had just been reinstated in all his honours and promoted to higher place we can picture him in his own contentment laughing very mightily. But it must all have done harm all the same.

CHAPTER VII.

PROMOTION TO CHIHLI: VAGARIES OF THE YELLOW RIVER (1869-1873).

We are now approaching the period when Li entered upon his thirty long years of viceroyalty of the Province of Chihli, alike important as containing Tientsin and Peking and the often-captured (now destroyed) Taku Forts. This post again, like that of Governor of Kiangsu, the province containing Shanghai, brought him in constant contact with foreigners, and thus tended further unduly to magnify Li's importance in the eyes of foreigners, many of whom think of him, not unnaturally, as the one Viceroy of China. There are in China, besides sixteen governors, as a matter of fact, eight viceroys, of whom those of Chihli and Canton, and the two of the Yangtse Valley—the one ruling over Kiangsi, Kiangsu, and Anhui, and the other over Hunan and Hupeh—come most in contact with foreigners; though the Viceroys of Fukien and Chekiang, with Foochow in the one province and Ningpo in the other, also have a good deal to do with them. The Viceroy of Szechuan has only lately seen his province flooded with missionaries. The officials of Kansuh and Yunnan and Kweichow, although very important in their own districts, disappear from foreign eyes when they go there. As a rule, the Viceroys of Chihli and Canton are most concerned in international questions, especially he of Chihli. When that post is held by a man like Li Hung-chang, he of necessity becomes China's leading man.

While Li had been serving as Viceroy of Hupeh and Hunan, he had somewhat distinguished himself by refusing to that other

grand old man, Admiral Sir Harry Keppel, the loan of a small steamer for a voyage of investigation on the Upper Yangtse. He had also tried to close the front gates of his official residence to the British Consul, alleging that a consul by treaty ranked only with a Taotai, and that Taotais were admitted by a side door. Happily the then British Consul at Hankow refused to come in by a side door; and Li yielded, but more than once complained to the Consul of his coming so often, saying that so many visits from a foreigner would bring him into bad odour with his own people. And it is a question how much of the very great dislike of Li certainly general amongst the Chinese people may be attributed to his being considered too much mixed up with foreigners.

It was, however, entirely to please himself and his love of luxury and grandeur that, instead of travelling by land or canal to take up his post at Wuchang, he had come by steamer to Shanghai; and although then obliged to tranship into a native junk in deference to popular native opinion, he caused this junk to be towed up the Yangtse by a steamer, and thus, with the escort of three other steamers, arrived at Wuchang.

It was whilst he was there that he was made a Cabinet Minister in reward for services against the Taiping and Nienfei rebels. This promotion brought him many congratulations, and even his mother received poems written in honour of the occasion. Li still continued to guard over the arsenal, now established at Nanking, over which Dr. Macartney presided; when a serious outbreak, which ended in establishing for a time a Mahomedan Kingdom in Yunnan, occurred in that province and in Kweichow; and Li, who had by this time got an extraordinary reputation as a subduer of rebels, was ordered to proceed once more to the West. He was about to start when another rebellion called for his assistance in Kansuh, where General Tso Tsung-tang was getting into difficulties—the same who afterwards recovered Kashgaria for the Emperor of China. It will be remembered that on that occasion having no proper commissariat, Tso Tsung-tang with true Chinese patience and pertinacity, sowed crops and reaped them to

supply his soldiers' needs as he went along—somewhat slowly.

It is possible that Tso Tsung-tang was already in his slow, dogged fashion subduing the rebels when Li arrived. Anyway the province was soon reported as in order, and Li summoned to Tientsin, there in concert with Tsêng Kwo-fan "and others," to conduct the necessary inquiry into the massacre that had just occurred there of sixteen French Sisters of Charity (including one Irish girl), several other French subjects, and a Russian merchant and his wife; also the destruction of the Roman Catholic Cathedral and French Consulate. Li knew more of the ways of foreigners than any Chinese official, and the occasion was a terrible one. Had it not been the year 1870 we can imagine the punishment that France would have inflicted; but that country was occupied with Germany, after which came her own terrible internecine struggle, and so when the British Consul was taking leave, after a long interview, on Li's asking: "Do you think France will make war next year?" we can imagine that the reply did not convey certainty. Yet even then the British Consul, impressed by Li's bearing and manner, wrote: "I take for granted that he will not tolerate any outrage on foreigners within his jurisdiction;" a judgment in which he was quite right, for never during his long career has Li encouraged, permitted, or condoned any outrages on foreigners. This also may have tended to increase rather than diminish the dislike entertained for him by his countrymen.

There having of late been some trouble between the Commissioner of Northern Trade and the Viceroy, the two offices were combined in Li's person, after the departure of old Tsêng from Chihli. For the Viceroy of Kiangsi and Chekiang very opportunely dying just then Tsêng Kwo-fan was sent back to his old post. It is noteworthy that Tsêng Kwo-fan, who permitted the Tientsin massacre, and did not properly punish it, was universally respected by foreigners in China; whilst Li, who never permitted a foreign massacre, to this day has some of the hardest terms of abuse served out to him by most foreigners residing in China. These last never as a

body in the least shared the high estimation held of him in Europe; but Li being a pre-eminently lucky person, which probably shows that he was a man who always knew how to use his opportunities, foreign writers have, almost without exception, been among his admirers. Without entering into all the oft-repeated details of the Tientsin massacre of 1870, to be succeeded by that of Wusieh in 1891, that of Foochow in 1895, and then the long string of massacres in that year of long sieges and great endurance, 1900, it may be mentioned that from this date Tso Tsung-tang and Li may be considered as rivals, the latter now made Commissioner of Trade for the Northern Ports, the former shortly afterwards appointed to the same office for the Southern Ports. Tso Tsung-tang was held to represent the old conservatism of China, loyal and thorough-going, but blunt and slow; on one occasion he camped outside the walls of Peking for several days, because he refused to pay the fees demanded for an Imperial audience.

Li Hung-chang never did anything of this kind; and perhaps by noticing what he never did, and what other people did, we may arrive at as true a view of his character as in any other way.

For instance, we have just noticed the return of Tsêng Kwo-fan to Nanking as Viceroy. No one can imagine Li issuing anything in the least like the touching memorial to the Throne penned on this occasion by his old patron :—

Being of no ability, and having, notwithstanding, been entrusted with the most important duties, I have, as I tottered along, failed to do anything meritorious. When, some years ago, I went to Shantung, I did not succeed in subduing the Nienfei, but returned to Nanking and was ever after ashamed of myself. Last year I was graciously nominated Viceroy of Chihli, but I made unsuitable appointments, mismanaged the army, and failed to do any good for the Yellow River. I tremble as I think of my blunders, and in consequence I am overwhelmed by the gracious order which directs me to reassume my former important post, and thus displays your Majesty's confidence in me, instead of (as would be just) reprobating my worthlessness and dismissing me. In gratitude for this clemency I will most carefully execute whatever duties may in the future be

entrusted to me. But ever since the second moon of this year, I have, day by day, become more feeble and ill, so that for two months, as I before represented, I was unable to attend to any business. During that very period I received an Imperial order, urging me to go at once to Tientsin. Knowing that the matters awaiting me there were very serious and important, I did not plead illness as an excuse, although, in fact, my eyes were most gravely affected; but I resolved that, as soon as possible, I would retire from official life, as I had previously announced my desire to do. After arriving at Tientsin my head failed me, the sun affected me strangely, and I suffered from vomiting and diarrhœa. From these latter I am now free, but my eyes are incurable; my right eye is completely blind, and the left is daily becoming more and more dim. One of the most important duties of a viceroy is to read the reports from his subordinate magistrates, but the condition of my eyes would preclude me from supervising any of the correspondence, and trusting a writer is out of the question. The business of Kiangnan *i.e.* Kiangsi, Kiangsu, and Anhui, is very heavy, and if in my enfeebled health I undertook it, things would soon be in confusion. During the eighteen months that have elapsed since I came to Chihli in the spring of last year, I have continually reproached myself on account of my mistakes, and reflected on the greatness of my guilt. With my sight as it is, I should certainly do worse in the future than even I do now. I am grateful for the favours of many past sovereigns. The Empress Dowager and Your Majesty are indescribably gracious in not taking note of my failures. It is not out of selfish regard for my own ease that I desire to retire and be at rest. My illness disables me from taking an official post, but it would be much worse were I to take it and prove incompetent to discharge its functions, seeming thus forgetful of your Majesty's favour. Over and over again I have concluded that another should be appointed, and the Edict commissioning me recalled, so that at once I may be overwhelmed with gratitude and the post be filled by a competent person. Up to the present the serious affairs at Tientsin have not been settled, but when Li Hung-chang arrives I will transfer the seals, and then remain to settle matters in concert with him, so that your Majesty's anxieties may the sooner be set at rest. But so soon as the affairs now pending are arranged, I will again request to be relieved from the duties of Cabinet Minister, so that I may take means to relieve the disease of my eyes, etc. etc.

Tsêng Kwo-fan had returned to Nanking, after an interval as Viceroy of Chihli, in which post Li succeeded him. It is perhaps worth while, in contrasting these two, to look at a picture of the elder man drawn at the time when he left Nanking before, in '68 :—

Tsêng Kwo-fan's departure from Nanking was delayed much beyond the date first determined on by Li's arrival, fresh from the Imperial presence, with many matters of importance to communicate to his old friend and patron. The latter was naturally anxious to discover whether his friends or foes were uppermost at Court, and whether there existed any ulterior motive for his being ordered to assume the viceroyalty of the metropolitan province. The feastings and theatrical representations with which the ex-Viceroy entertained his young and successful protégé also absorbed some time, but at length came to an end; and on the 15th December the all but Imperial Tsêng Kwo-fan left the city which he had so long ruled more like a king than a viceroy. There was no noisy demonstration on the part of the people, as would have been the case in the West. Yet the manner in which they showed their profound respect for the aged Governor was not less marked. There was no shout, no huzza; no triumphal arches had been erected over the way through which he passed out of the city; but all along the road from the Viceregal palace to the West gate, a distance of some miles, altars, with candles and incense burning, had been erected; and before these, in two long rows, the people again and again bowed down and worshipped him as if he had been a god. Women held up their children to him as they do when the Host or image of their city god is paraded in the streets; but the most affecting sight was when the elders of the city, about 100 in number, white-haired men of from 60 to 70 years of age, came forward and detainingly laid their hands on the sedan chair, refusing for a time to let the old man pass. The conduct of the people reminded one of some high religious festival, and might easily have been mistaken for such, had it not been for the gay appearance of the Thespian stages which, at different places on the route, had been erected for the presentation of such bright characters in the country's history as Tsêng had copied or surpassed in his official career. The crowd, headed by the elders, closed in after the chair, and flowed after it like a river, through the city gate and

down to the place where the Viceregal barge awaited him. There the people collected in such numbers that only the want of standing ground prevented the city from being entirely emptied.

This picture of the beloved Viceroy's departure from the provincial capital, where he had so long held sway, makes us feel the heart of the Chinese people beat, and transports us for a moment not perhaps to the China that exists, but to that which Chinese have aimed at creating. The Chinese ideal is quite different from our own, in that it counts the family as the unit, not the individual, and seeks always rather to obtain deference for age than to make way for youth; and if like our own it has never been realised that is because both aim high. Few people in Europe realise how deeply democratic ideas are ingrained in the Chinese nation; coupled as they are with a paternal feeling on the part of good officials for those whom they look upon as their children, and they treat with a friendly bonhomie much more pleasing than the manner usual in England. "A man's a man for a' that" does not need to be enunciated in China. Indeed, whilst Europeans often condemn the Chinese for their ignorance about Europe and its ways, I have often thought how startlingly ignorant Europeans might be pronounced if judged by Chinese after the same fashion.

There must have been something singularly lovable about the distinguished official, who could write the memorial quoted above, and about whom this description could be written; the Chinese mask, alike impressive and expressionless, seems to fall off, and we feel the human touch that links all the world together. It is not Li's fault that the edict appointing him, being a State paper, has nothing of this; for indeed none who ever talked with Li could think for a moment that the human element was deficient in him. But before dwelling on that we must follow him a little further in his official career.

Li's first memorial, however, contains a very marked indication of good feeling and loyalty to the officers and troops he had commanded and hoped to command again, and whom he

took care not to forget in the moment of his great advancement:—

Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Chihli, in a memorial to the Throne, states that, in July, 1869, he recommended to the notice of the Emperor those officers who had taken a distinguished part in the campaign of 1868—a campaign which resulted in giving tranquillity to the Empire. H. I. Majesty was graciously pleased to allow honours, etc., to those officers. The Board of War, however, sent a counter memorial, requesting that the special merit or services of each officer should be clearly stated beneath his name. Again, in April, 1870, the memorialist petitioned the Throne to bestow some mark of Imperial favour on the officers who had subjugated the Nienfei in the West. The Emperor was graciously pleased to grant the petition. But the Board of War again sent a counter memorial, requesting that the services of each officer should be enumerated. The memorialist would state that the officers, whom he has recommended for promotion and honours, are all veteran warriors, who in a long series of battles fought hand to hand with the Nienfei, till those rebels were utterly exterminated. They traversed, amid innumerable dangers, many thousand miles of country, and fought over a hundred battles. The civilian has a thousand ways by which he can attain honour and distinction; but for the soldier, the battlefield is the only arena where he can win a single laurel. The list which the memorialist has forwarded to the Throne does not contain a single name that has not merited the distinction asked; but the officers having gone home or having joined other regiments, it is impossible now to give the special services of each. By such quibbling as this on the part of the Board of War, veteran heroes who have survived a hundred battles are left all unhonoured to beat their breasts and sigh. This is not the way to excite bravery among the troops. The memorialist prays, therefore, that services of so unusual a character may be suitably rewarded, and that the Board of War be directed to follow the lists forwarded in 1869 and 1870, without requiring details of individual prowess.

The Board of War at that time in China seems to have been as vexatious as our own War Office. They started on the ideal theory that the noblest men would always be ready to place their abilities at their country's disposition, that

LI HUNG-CHANG (1871).

(From a photo by Messrs. Thomson, Grosvenor Street, W.)

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whether these men were paid £10 or £1,000, it would make no difference to the way in which they would exert themselves, and that, therefore, a living wage was all that was necessary for an official. The living wage was fixed long ago, and has not been altered. The melancholy result of all this is, that men being from the Fall liable to temptation, and also unable as time went on to live upon the nominal pay of a Chinese mandarin, officials very early began to take bribes, next to exact them, then gradually to pay for their different posts in proportion to the amount they expected to be able to extort; till a newspaper correspondent did not very much exaggerate when he wrote :—

A Taotai-ship, for example, is something which is worth a large purchase-money; it means a licence to rob several millions of people for the space of three years. The official cares nothing for canals, roads, military defences, or local institutions of any kind; which are calculated to benefit the people after his time. His instincts are those of the locust, which would devour without remorse not only the crop of this year, but the seed of the next. After his three years, the deluge. He will rather extort his three lacs of taels than that there should remain one solvent or industrious man in the province.

If a Taotai-ship affords such facilities, it may be imagined what now were those of Li as both Viceroy of Chihli and Commissioner of Trade for the Northern Ports. Li, as the Chinese say, was a tortoise—the emblem of water—so that whenever he went to Chihli the floods came forth, but ceased when he was removed; and at once, at the outset, he found himself favoured by a special outbreak on the part of the Yellow River, which is often nicknamed China's Sorrow, but which certainly for years past has afforded a steady source of revenue to generations of Chinese officials.

Li, in a long memorial to the Throne, points out the insufficiency of the sum allowed for the repairs of the Southern Canal :—

Though the Southern Canal is over 200 miles in length, the allowance for the yearly repairs of this canal is only 15,000 taels,

and for incidental repairs, 6,000. The Board of Works reduced these sums to one-fourth. The memorialist now begs that 40 per cent. of the original total grant of 21,000 taels may be allowed for the Southern Canal. Less than this is really not sufficient to keep it in proper repair. Since the Yellow River has flowed in its present northern channel, this canal has suffered from the large body of water flowing into it, much more than the Northern Canal; yet twice as much is allowed for the repairs of the latter. The late floods have done so much damage that it is imperatively necessary that the canals should be put in order, otherwise the transport service will be seriously interfered with and much life and property imperilled. The floods last year were caused by the silting of the canals and the dilapidated state of the embankments. The reason why the canals were in this condition is, that for the last twenty years the grant for repairs has been so small that no officials have been specially employed to take care of them, and who is to blame for failing to do what he had not the means of doing? This is a penny wise and pound foolish economy, as the past year's misfortunes show.

That was in February, 1872. In June, we read that:—

Last year the Yung-ting broke its embankment in two different places; the river officials, by working night and day, have succeeded in completing the repairs within the period formerly fixed, and their exertions certainly merit some recognition. Chu-kai, intendant of the Taming, Shunte and Kwang-ping circuit, is handed over to the Board of Civil Office to be rewarded in the most liberal manner which the law will allow. Expectant Prefect Hsu Pen-heng, as soon as he has received an appointment as prefect, will have effective rank as Tao-tai, he is also given a flowered peacock's feather. Seven other officials are similarly rewarded, and five, who had been degraded, are restored to their former rank.

And yet on the 5th September, Li himself reports:—

The Yung-ting has burst its banks. During the heavy rains which occurred towards the end of the summer, it was observed that the river rose and fell alternately, and orders were repeatedly sent to the inspector of the river to be on the alert. He now reports that in consequence of the heavy rain which set in on the

1st August, and which continued to pour incessantly for several days, the plains in the neighbourhood of the Great Wall were several fathoms under water, with no outlet but the Yung-ting. Hence the officer in charge at Shih-ching-shan had to report a sudden rise of 16 feet in the river at 9 a.m. on the 4th August; and at 5 p.m. on the same day, a further rise of 3 feet 6 inches. Next day it had risen 23 feet 5 inches, a height which it never attained even last year, the torrent also being proportionately stronger. The rush and pressure of the water against the banks were so great that it was evident they must give way. Every imaginable plan was tried by the officials to prevent such a catastrophe; but the violence of the current defied their efforts. The locks were opened and about 2 feet 5 inches of water let off; but the bulk of water was too great to effect any appreciable diminution; the banks consequently burst in several places. Similar tidings were received from the sub-prefect of Shih-ching-shan. There the river had so swollen that the water overflowed the banks; the latter being eventually swept away, leaving a free channel for the water to pour out on the surrounding country. The soldiers and country people were called out to repair the breach, but to no purpose. The water continued to rise, and rushed along with such fury that human effort was vain. On hearing of this, the river inspector, Li Chao-i, immediately repaired to the spot to see what he could do; but, alas! he found the breach was already from 600 to 700 feet long, and that nothing could be done.

After the bursting of the banks last year, the memorialist had locks (or sluices) erected, and the Yingho cleaned out, hoping thereby to prevent such calamities in the future. He also ordered that a large supply of material should be kept always on hand in case of emergency. The banks, however, were so saturated last year that they are still moist and loose. The rise in the river, too, was something extraordinary, being over 20 feet, while the rain was pouring down in torrents and the wind blowing a perfect gale. Human strength contended in vain against such difficulties. Still, the officials having failed to save the embankments, must be held culpable, and it is the memorialist's duty to request their punishment. He himself having failed to direct his subordinates, requests that he may be handed over to the Board to be punished according to his deserts. He is making every possible effort to remedy the disaster.

To touch the examinations of China is to touch the very foundation on which the whole fabric of social life is built up; and to Chinese ears probably the depths of misery would be best conveyed by the following curt announcement:—

Li Hung-chang and Hsia Tung Shan, literary chancellor of Chihli, request that the literary examinations in the Ho-chien and Shen departments may be deferred till next autumn. The floods have destroyed the examination halls, and the people are in a most destitute condition.

In spite of Li's efforts, travellers from Paoting-fu in September, 1873, reported:—

Every river in that part of Chihli that has any banks has long since burst them. The general impression of boat travel in that part of the province is that of an ocean voyage. For vast distances no land is in sight. The extent of loss, misery, and devastation which this implies cannot be computed. The sudden influx of water has set in motion a vast number of coffins, which were calmly reposing on their ancestral mounds, but which are now driven about, the sport of winds and waves, like so many Noah's arks. Like the ark, they "sail from no port, are to no port bound; their only wish is soon to run aground."

This picture of the poor coffins bound to no port is so graphic that I can but regret that I do not know to whom to render my obligations for it.

The English reader must not be worn out with the infinite vagaries of the rivers of China—the Yellow River removed its mouth 400 miles in 1853. But in conjunction with all this we must note the rewards of merit:—

Li Hung-chang, when reporting the contribution of cotton-quilted clothing from Kiangsu and Chekiang, for the sufferers by the floods in Chihli, mentioned the munificent gift of 10,000 garments from Hu Kwang Yung. He has now to report a further gift of 5,000 garments from the same person, and also a quantity of agricultural implements valued at 10,000 taels. Furthermore, he has received a despatch from the Commissioner of Salt transport, inclosing a communication from a salt merchant named Yang Chun Yuen, stating that he erected a shed last August on the city

wall at Tientsin for the accommodation of a number of refugees, whom he daily supplied with food for three months at a cost of more than 5,000 taels. He is now giving two meals a day to over 2,500 persons, which will cost him during the next five months more than 6,000 taels. The hospital and kitchens outside of the West Gate will also necessitate an outlay on his part of 8,000 taels over and above what other persons have contributed. Put together, these sums will make about 20,000 taels. The memorialist prays that his Majesty will graciously be pleased to send a tablet to each of these generous persons, in honour of their noble liberality. Such individuals are few.

And again :—

Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Chihli, begs the Throne to confer honours on the officials of the Canton province who contributed so liberally towards the relief of the sufferers by the floods in the North last year. In addition to the tribute rice and public funds which were appropriated for the relief of the sufferers, contributions of clothes, rice, and money were also solicited from Kiangsu, Chekiang, and other provinces. Canton being a wealthy commercial province, it was the intention of the Viceroy to set on foot a general subscription for the relief of the people in the North, but it unfortunately happened that Canton itself was also suffering from floods and consequent failure of crops, so that no help could be expected from either the agricultural or mercantile classes. Anxious, however, to do something for the starving multitudes of Chihli, the Viceroy started a subscription list among the mandarins, and altogether the munificent sum of 420,000 taels was subscribed. The Viceroy headed the list with a subscription of 6,000 taels; the Commissioner of Maritime Customs and the Salt Commissioner followed with a subscription of 10,000 taels each; the Provincial Treasurer gave 2,000 taels, etc. etc. The action of the Viceroy in this matter is most praiseworthy; but as he holds high office, and as the Commissioner of Customs, Chung Li, is also an official of the second rank, the memorialist will not presume to say what honours should be conferred on them; but on the Salt Commissioner he would beg the Throne to bestow a button of the second rank. Although all the officials, from the treasurer downwards, have sent to say that they will not accept any honours, yet the memorialist would suggest that they be included in the general list of subscribers

when that list is laid before the Throne, and that they be allowed to transfer their honours to some member of their respective families.

Even the gods have to be rewarded. In February, 1872, an Edict is issued in reference to a memorial from Li Hung-chang reporting a special case of interposition on the part of the River God, and begging the Throne to bestow a tablet in commemoration of the event. During the summer and autumn of the previous year there had been such a heavy fall of rain that the rivers and canals about Tientsin rose to an unusual height, but "through the gracious interposition of the River God, the weather cleared and the waters gradually decreased. This is a mercy which calls for the deepest gratitude, and the Hanlin College must prepare a suitable tablet and send it to Li Hung-chang, to be reverently placed in the Ta-Wang temple at Tientsin, in acknowledgment of the divine favour."

That it may be seen that Li Hung-chang was not exceptional in his reverential feelings, we must mention in the same year an Edict regarding a memorial from Tso Tsung-tang, requesting the Throne to bestow an honorific tablet on the God of Thunder.

During the sixth moon of the present year, the Imperial troops attacked Suchow (in the north-west of Kansuh), and by the miraculous aid of the God of Thunder won a great victory over the rebels. Such an event calls for profound gratitude; and the Hanlin is ordered to prepare a suitable tablet, and forward it to Tso Tsung-tang to be placed in the temple of the God of Thunder in the provincial capital of Kansuh, in acknowledgment of divine favour.

Again, in August of the same year Ting Pao-cheng, lieut.-governor of Shantung, reports two miracles wrought by Kwang-ti, the God of War, and begs the Throne to bestow an Imperial tablet on his temple, in acknowledgment of his favour.

A despatch from the district magistrate of Chiahsiang, states that during the spring of last year, no rain having fallen for two months, fears were entertained regarding the crops; so the magistrate,

together with all the officials and gentry of the district, went to the temple of Kwang-ti and offered solemn prayer. Before three days had elapsed, rain fell in copious and refreshing showers, to the joy of all classes of people, who recognised in it the miraculous interposition of Kwang-ti. The magistrate of the district then, out of gratitude for such timely favour, contributed funds from his own salary to repair Kwang-ti's temple, which had been long in a dilapidated condition. Again, during the eighth moon of last year, when the Yellow River burst its banks in the Yuncheng district, the city was in imminent danger of being carried away by the torrent. The plain around was several feet under water, and though every effort was made to protect the city, the aspect of affairs was most alarming. To make bad worse, on the 16th of the month it began to rain and blow furiously, and continued to do so night and day, and in consequence the water rose still higher and was lashed by the wind into huge billows, which swept away the dams thrown up to protect the city, and the walls were washed down in several places. The city was literally crowded with refugees, even the streets and alleys being blocked up by them, and was the scene of confusion and terror. The magistrate accompanied by the officials and people, then went to the temple of Kwang-ti to implore his interposition, and instantly both the wind and the rain ceased, and the water gradually subsided. Thus through the help of Kwang-ti the city was saved, and so astounding was the miracle that even women and children united in reverencing him. Now that the temple has been thoroughly repaired, the Throne is earnestly entreated to bestow an Imperial tablet on it, in acknowledgment of the favour of the God.

Naturally, Li's unusually rapid promotion had aroused jealousy, but even without taking that into consideration we should expect to find a censor memorialising the Throne regarding the bursting of the embankments of the Yung-ting after Li had recommended all concerned in it for rewards. "The officials who superintended the work are clearly to blame and are without excuse." Several officials are therefore stripped of their buttons, but retained in office. Li himself is handed over to the Board of Civil Office for not having better directed his subordinates regarding their work. "He must order the officials concerned to repair the breach with all possible speed, and to see that the work is

done well. Great care must also be taken from time to time to keep the embankments in proper repair; there must be no negligence in this respect."

But the following memorial against him is so very entertaining in the many side-lights it throws upon quaint Chinese customs, as also in the naïveté with which it allows the jealousy of the writer to be seen, that it must be quoted entire:—

August 30th, 1872.—Pien Pao-chuen, superintending censor of Chekiang, memorialises the Throne condemning the presentation of a specimen of "auspicious" or double-eared grain by Li Hung-chang, as an act fraught with danger, and begs the Throne to issue instructions on the subject in order to prevent the evils to which that act may give rise. The adulation and flattery with which sycophants attempt to impose on the Throne must necessarily have some basis from which to start, and it is best to crush the thing from its beginning, just as one would stop a stream while it was shallow or arrest an evil while it was yet small. In times of prosperity "felicitous omens" are not spoken of, and as to the saying that "a plentiful year is a happy omen," it simply means that the harvest is good and the people peacefully following their several avocations. The memorialist has never yet heard of anyone in times of repeated flood and drought reporting felicitous omens! From the Han to the Tang dynasties, Court Ministers vied with each other in talking about the prosperity of the State as indicated by this and that auspicious augury. At first only one or two persons indulged in such extravagant flattery, but the evil grew till every bush and bit of grass was converted into an auspicious omen, and eager was the race as to who should present it to the Emperor first! Nothing is more calculated to make the Sovereign vain and extravagant or to deceive the people than such a practice. The memorialist has been led to make the foregoing remarks in consequence of having seen in the *Peking Gazette* a memorial from Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Chihli, reporting the appearance of double-eared corn in Ching-yuen-hsien and Kwang-pingfu. Specimens of the corn were also presented for his Majesty's inspection, and the occurrence treated as something unusually wonderful. Now this memorial will be read and discussed all over the Empire. But far from there being anything so

very marvellous in the event, it is really a very ordinary occurrence, as an appeal to history will at once prove. In the fourth year of Taitsu of the Sung dynasty (954 A.D.) there was wheat in Kai-chow, in Chihli, and Puyang-hsien, having from two to six ears on one stalk. During the reign of Shentsung also, there were 40 mows of double-eared wheat in Shenchow, in the Chihli province. And again, during the time of Hwaitsung there was corn in Tsaichow having from two to eight ears on a stalk. Now all these instances occurred during one dynasty, and it would be simply impossible to enumerate all the cases which occurred during the other dynasties. The memorialist was brought up in the country, and knows from observation that, except during very bad years, the existence of double-eared wheat is a common phenomenon. The cause of such fecundity may be either the richness of the soil or the undue share of nutriment which these particular stalks obtained. Either of these causes would be quite sufficient to account for the phenomenon. How, therefore, can such a very common feature be considered a prodigy?

But while speaking of auspicious omens, he would mention an event which occurred during the Han dynasty. Two Court Ministers suggested to Changti that he should change the style of his reign to Changho, on account of the host of happy auguries then occurring; but Ho Chang (also a Minister), basing his argument on the classics, rebuked them there and then, and they were so confounded that they could not answer him. Ma Twan-lin devotes a section of his work, the Wen-hsien-tung-kao, written in the time of Chih-yuen (Kublai Khan, 1281—1296) to the consideration of the various auspicious omens of past ages, and he defines such omens as "extraordinary or unusual phenomena." An omen is, therefore, something uncommon. How, then, can Li Hung-chang put down as a felicitous omen such a commonplace thing as a stalk of double-eared wheat? Last year Chihli was the scene of floods such as had not been witnessed for many tens of years. The south-east of the province was a vast sea, and there was nothing left but to appeal to other provinces for help, issue maize from the Imperial granaries, appropriate public funds, and remit the taxes, in order to relieve the distress. His Majesty, too, was troubled and made anxious by the occurrence. Even up to the present time many places are still under water. Supposing that both the spring and autumn crops were abundant this year they

could not make up for the loss of last year. But the fact is that the harvest is not good, except in about half of the province. Moreover, it is now rumoured that the Yungting, though only just repaired, has burst its banks, and that Paoting, Tientsin, and the south of Shuntien are flooded by the overflowing of the various rivers and canals which intersect them. And in addition to all this, the crops are being destroyed by locusts. Where, then, shall we look for the plenty prognosticated by this double-eared wheat? Such fulsome flattery as that now in question is the work of idle, useless magistrates who, whenever they can hit upon anything, make a handle of it to ingratiate themselves with their superiors. So, too, with a certain set of low gentry, who make a pretext of the least trifle to flatter. It is in this way that the evil now complained of begins. Seeing that peace has not yet been restored in some of the neighbouring provinces, nor the people been rescued from their misery; considering also the high position which Li Hung-chang occupies and the great reputation he enjoys; it was surely his duty to sympathise with their Majesties the Empress and Emperor in their sorrow, and imitate the fidelity of Ho Chang when he rebuked the unseemly adulation of Sung Yeu and Yuen An. As to his reference to an old tale about the appearance of double-eared corn in Yu Yang during the rule of Chang Kan, it must be remembered that that was a time of plenty, and that the people were so rejoicing in the good government of Chang Kan that they sang songs in his honour; while Chihli, on the other hand, is now suffering from the effects of repeated calamities, and its people wandering hither and thither in a most pitiable condition. Yet Li Hung-chang insults the Throne with talk about "happy omens," and compares himself to the ancients! Ostensibly he sent his report for the gratification of the Throne, but really in order to praise his own government. Such a practice, once begun, will soon have plenty of imitators, and will give rise to an innumerable host of evils.

The inconsiderate behaviour of the Yellow River, and the sarcasms of memorialists, were of no serious detriment to the Viceroy of Chihli; nor did these matters occupy his exclusive attention at this period.

For instance, there is a quaint, characteristically Chinese memorial concerning an old lady of 94, who had seen seven

generations, viz. her grand-parents, parents, and her own children and grandchildren to the fourth generation. Five generations were then living together in the same home—namely, mother, son, grandsons, great-grandsons, and great-great-grandsons. Her son was a Chin shih (LL.D.); of her five grandsons one was a Chü-jen (M.A.), and another a Pa-king (a wrangler); of her eleven great-grandsons one was a Yu-kung (B.A. with honours), of great-great-grandchildren there were two. Li begged that this auspicious circumstance might be commemorated in the usual way by erecting a stone arch.

Similarly he was concerned with the case of his deceased brother, Li Chaow-ching, who had been a superintendent of the Salt Trade; his modesty had prevented him from making known his own meritorious services against the rebels, and Li being his brother could not himself draw proper attention to his relation's merits. The latter came to Peking to obtain an audience with the Emperor, and was again attacked by a disease of which he had formerly suffered from hardships in service. After his death we can readily believe that Li, who was always zealous to help his own family, took far more trouble to obtain some proof of posthumous regard, than if he could himself have applied for it directly; besides adopting his son.

To this time also belonged Li's design of having the history of the Imperial Domain revised and written up to date. It was a hundred and forty years since the last issue of this work, and it was high time, he said, that steps should be taken to draw up the history of that period, otherwise there would be no reliable materials for doing so. He proposed to entrust the preparation of the work to a committee of learned officials and gentry, materials for the history to be drawn from official documents, private family records, and from the tales of old people, nothing to be rejected because it might seem trivial, and every precaution taken to insure accuracy. The cost of preparation was to be borne by the provincial exchequer.

Not long after, again, he was "requesting manifestations

of Imperial approbation for the conduct of women of the province whose lives were sacrificed during the rebel inroads which had taken place during the last and the present reign. The official committee at present employed in drawing up a revised edition of the Statistical Record of the Metropolitan Department reports that, over and above the cases which have already been brought before his Majesty's notice, there are upwards of fifteen hundred instances in which the lives of women have been lost, either by massacre at the sword's point, or by suicide to escape dishonour, which have not yet been brought forward, and it is now requested that orders be given to the proper Board for the establishment of memorials in each case, as a solace to the names of the virtuous departed."

Shall we ever see a similar record concerning those unhappy Chinese women who were similarly driven to their death in 1900?

Finally there were the Tientsin rowdies to be put down, men known throughout China as the worst and most disorderly of their kind; but Li succeeded in dealing with them, for which, as recorded at the time, he merited the best thanks of all orderly, law-abiding Chinese people.

Now, however, we must turn to an important episode—the marriage of the young Emperor, and the events which followed in its train.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EMPEROR TUNG-CHIH: HIS MARRIAGE AND DEATH (1872—1875).

When the young Emperor Tung-chih was a boy of twelve, it was thought that the time had arrived when it was proper that he should marry and assume the Imperial authority.

One Empress, a wife for the right and another for the left, with eight secondary wives, constituted the imperial harem. The law requires all who belong to the eight "Banners" which are divided into Manchu, Mongol and Chinese, to be willing to send their daughters if of proper age. None are eligible who do not belong to the eight Banners established in Peking or in the provincial garrisons. Mothers, sisters, and sisters-in-law can go with them to the palace and see them occasionally, but the male members of the family can only see them when on journeys.

On the third day of the second month 108 girls were taken into the palace for inspection; of ages varying from ten to thirteen, so that the Empress should not be more than one year older, or two years younger than the Emperor. Of the hundred and eight, twelve were retained for a time, but soon sent home. A call was then issued for girls from the Banner families in the provinces. A large number of eligible girls in the Banner families in Peking were at once reported as in ill-health or deformed as an excuse to prevent the dreaded isolation of the palace life and irrevocable cutting of home ties. But all were required to appear in the seventh month, deception being suspected. In the eighth month, the Emperor was to be married at twelve and a half years of age. It was not, however, till 1872 that the ceremony took place.

Among the wedding guests were the Ambassadors from the Tributary States of Corea, Annam, and Loochoo. The first-mentioned came, it is said, expressly to do homage on the auspicious occasion. The resident Foreign Ministers, who refused to ko-tow—*i.e.* to bow down and touch the ground with the forehead—were thereby excluded from the ceremonial. It may be remembered the present Emperor's brother, Prince Chun, refused to perform this ceremony at Berlin in 1902, on his mission of contrition for the murder of the German Minister in 1900 in Peking.

Excepting the procession from the Imperial palace to the Empress-elect's residence, everything was conducted within the sacred privacy of the palace. The European may note a very striking ceremony, which took place on the fourth day after the marriage, when the Emperor was presented to his mother and the Empress Dowager, and, at the command of a herald, the Lord of the Dragon Throne, with his princes, nobles, and high officers, rulers and subjects, all prostrated themselves before the two Empresses, Tsz-An and Tsz-Hsi—two women; after which both were presented with additional titles.

I cannot find any actual record of Li's presence, but he must have played a prominent part, his imposing presence towering over the crowd of other officials. Also as Viceroy of Chihli he must have had to provide much money for the expenses.

On Oct. 22nd was issued the Edict by which the Emperor nominally took the power into his own hands, as the young King of Spain did in May, 1902.

The Empress-Mother presented Prince Kung with a scroll in that fine, bold, artistic hand so familiar to all who, during the recent troubles, have enjoyed the opportunity of wandering through the august halls of the Peking palaces, where many specimens of Tze-Hsi's masterly handwriting decorate the walls; for the Chinese do not look upon writing as simply a means of conveying ideas, but as in itself an end, as much as any picture; and the Chinese character is so decorative that even Europeans soon find their eyes resting on a beautiful

specimen of Chinese writing with almost as much pleasure as on a fine landscape. Tze-Hsi's handwriting, once seen, is unforgettable, and at once predisposes the beholder to admire yet dread the writer.

On December 2nd the *Peking Gazette* records :—

> Hitherto the Empress-Mother, listening to all affairs of State, has been unremitting in her exertions to promote the public good. She has regulated audiences, settled the Five Relationships, promoted the worthy, and punished the rebellious; from first to last the country has enjoyed peace, and the people have lived in comfort. Thus has her Majesty imitated the good example of former rulers, and history will record her worth.

On March 18th, 1873, Li left for Peking to have his first audience with the Emperor after his accession, as also to see Prince Kung and the other Ministers of State. He had two more audiences with the young Emperor, and the *Peking Gazette* records that Li on some occasions showed opposition to Imperial commands. His Majesty thereupon commanded that the Viceroy should be fined nine months' pay of his salary. There is no record what these commands were, but it seems as if they must have been verbal, not signed with the vermilion pencil, or Li must have obeyed.

It was now his duty to start some days before the Emperor, who was departing on a State Pilgrimage, and to see that everything was in order for his reception on the way and at the tombs in the Eastern mountains, where sacrifices have been offered by Emperors year by year. The Foreign Ministers, all full of the important question of the Audience, at that time anticipated no help from Li, who at that period of his life was regarded as anti-foreign. On his return to Tientsin, for two days all the officials were calling upon him to congratulate him; and the rumour got about that at Li's last audience the Emperor, after having listened for over a couple of hours to what Li had to say on some important questions, political and diplomatic, said to him: "Such being your views of these various matters, it is very evident to me that, as you have thoroughly studied them,

you are the fittest man in the country to see them efficiently carried out. I therefore now command you to reside at the capital as one of the Ministers of State, so as to be present always to advise the Throne regarding the proper settlement of the questions which you have just spoken of, and which you apparently understand correctly, and regarding other matters which may from time to time arise politically or diplomatically."

This rumour probably rather shows what Tientsin officials were beginning to think of Li than the opinion of the somewhat rowdy young Emperor. The Pilgrimage to the Imperial Tombs seems to have been very badly managed that year; the camels were not ready in time, and the mules were half-starved and could not go; the officials in charge of the transport, both those connected with the Imperial Stables and the luggage, were alike blamed; whilst the Chief of the Eunuchs was banished, and other officials discharged because they were hasty *in handling the dishes.* Which all looks as if the Emperor were not only youthful, but also hasty tempered, and anything but likely to appreciate Li's judgment on important questions, political and diplomatic.

The *Gazette* of April 14 congratulates the Emperor on his birthday, while that of the 16th appoints officials to prepare a mausoleum for himself and his wife Ahlute. This to Chinese would not seem the least incongruous; they have not the horror of death with which Christians seem so unfortunately to regard the inevitable passage to what we say we believe to be higher life beyond; and a coffin is sometimes the sole and very handsome ornament of a country house entrance hall. The very words of the Emperor show a feeling different from that of Europe:—

When respectfully worshipping at the Eastern Mausoleum, we noticed a happily placed piece of ground, to the east of the latter, which is luxuriant and beautiful in aspect, and is surrounded by hills and water. We have prayed the two Empresses to go themselves and inspect this spot in person, and their Majesties have graciously replied as follows: "These two spots are most decidedly places for happiness for all future ages. Respect this." We,

looking up and realising the tender concern of their Majesties on our behalf, deem it our duty to select a propitious day on which to commence building tombs on these spots.

The following description of the return from the Tombs by a European may perhaps cast some light upon the appearance of the present Emperor, Kwang-Hsü, whose want of animation when seen in public has been so severely noticed by newspaper correspondents. There was no idea at the time of his accession that Tung-chih was not destined to a long life. No one said he had a mortal disease, or had lost his intellect, and he probably had the advantage of some loving care from that remarkable woman, his mother. Yet here is the contemporary record :—

April 11*th*, 1873.—About forty finely-dressed servant girls, from thirteen to nineteen years of age, accompanied the Empresses, and these again had a number of middle-aged women to dress and attend on them. The hand-maidens and their female servants all travelled in carts, and appeared to enjoy the trip immensely, judging by their looks and laughter. The Empresses had their hair dressed horn fashion, like other Manchu ladies. The Empress-mother looked extremely well, and appeared to enjoy the trip heartily. Both the ladies were of course dressed in splendid silks.

The Emperor did not appear a first-class horseman, as he held the reins of the bridle with his right hand, the arm stretched almost to its full length, with the hand of course well forward on the pony's neck. A groom walked on the near side of the pony and had hold of the rein there. The Emperor appeared either very fatigued or entirely sunk in thought, for he did not look either to the right or to the left at the people kneeling by the roadside, but sat bent forward on the saddle like a very wearied person. He is apparently of short stature ; his face is long, thin, and sallow.

It is exactly after this fashion that correspondents have described the present Emperor on his return to Peking, with the single exception of one Japanese, who describes him as conversing with the greatest animation with his suite.

On the way "the Emperor Tung-chih's face had got

bronzed by exposure to the sun, the official spring hat being no protection against its rays; and as the roads are very dusty, it had besides a plentiful covering of dust. He appeared to be in the best of spirits and in excellent health, his whole appearance being in that respect in great contrast to what it was when he departed from the capital seven days previously."

The great audience ultimately took place, lasting after all but about five minutes. Everything was in order. But Tung-chih died within the year, aged eighteen, and leaving no good reputation behind him, though whether it is true that he was in the habit of breaking bounds and visiting the disreputable haunts of Peking incognito does not seem quite certain. It is certainly believed that his death was not made known till some time after it had occurred, and that when he was already nine days dead he was stated, in token of rejoicing for his own convalescence, to have bestowed various honours and donations. Then on Jan. 13th, 1875, we read:—

Prostrate upon earth, we bewail our grief to Heaven, vainly stretching out our hands in lamentation. For thirteen years, as we in humility reflect, his Majesty now departed reigned under the canopy of Heaven. In reverent observance of the ancestral precepts he made the counsels prompted by maternal love his guide, applying himself with awestruck zeal to the toilsome performance of his duty. For not a single day, in reverence for Heaven and in obedience to the ancestral pattern, did he cease to be inspired with devotion in the cause of government and love on behalf of his people. He gave the charge of office to the attached and wise. He vanquished and subdued the great revolt. The welfare of the people and the policy of the State were ever present in his inmost thoughts. Sincere in the deepest measure must be at this time the grief and lamentation of all to whom the breath of life is given. Not in words can we give expression to the sadness which pierces our heart and shows itself in tears of blood.

And now we come to the dark secret history of the remorseless woman who still rules the destinies of China by the will of the foreign nations of Europe rather than

by that of the Chinese people. She is sometimes accused of the death of her son, as some people also accuse her of having got rid of the Emperor Hien-fêng, the fugitive to Jehol, whose concubine she was, and whose favour she may possibly have feared to lose. She is often accused of having eventually got rid of the other Empress, Tze-An; but even at the Chinese Court people must die a natural death sometimes. There is, however, no doubt at all that she did get Ahlute, the young wife of her son Tung-chih, who was then with child, to commit suicide or die in some way—Chinese people generally say she was made to drink from a poisoned cup; and the two young people being thus "removed," we have this memorial from Li and others:—

Her late Majesty, a lady of perfect virtue and of a family elevated by its refined breeding, was affianced to his late Majesty and became Queen Consort of the "Central" Palace; her benevolence suffused itself throughout the Court. The fountain-head of the "female element," and the first symbol thus of the earth, she centred around her an atmosphere of virtue illimitable in extent, and responded to the divine scheme of nature by co-operating with and assisting the "male principle." Her gentleness and excellence formed a pattern for study, and her strict rectitude exerted influence throughout the six Palaces. Her deportment was retiring and modest, and for the three years that she graced the Court, while making manifest the excellence of her rule over the "inner affairs," she further shared in the anxieties and toils attending the administration of government. As successor to their Majesties the Empresses Dowager, she further displayed her filial devotion by her attractive and winning ways; and the many feminine qualities thus illustriously exhibited have been evident to every inmate of the Palace. In conformity with the regulations handed down by our ancestors, it is fitting that a glorious epitaph and posthumous title be selected for her departed Majesty; and the ministry is hereby commanded to examine and carefully note the record and ceremonial canons, and to respectfully make a suitable selection. The Ministers, while paying additional tributes to the memory of her departed Majesty, remark with the greatest humility that where the virtues of an Emperor and his Consort harmonise, the effect may be compared to the sun and moon

beautifying the heavens—(the sun is another emblem of the male, as the moon of the female principle)—and that where the two natures accord, the female acts in unison with the male, and the scheme of nature is thus carried out; etc. etc.

The poor young dead girl is dubbed "yielding, chaste, careful, virtuous and intelligent, who governed her actions by the laws of Heaven, and whose life added lustre to the teachings of the Sages," and succeeding writers have all shed a tear over the early death of the beautiful Ahlute, for whom and for her mother-in-law, Tze-Hsi, there was not room enough in this small world. Tze-Hsi had still a sister left, and on a bitterly cold night in January, 1875, she stole that sister's child out of his warm bed, conveyed him to the Palace, and proclaimed him Emperor next morning. Chinese always add, "and the child wept!" Poor Kwang-Hsü has often had cause for even bitterer tears since then. But he still lives. His mother, Tze-Hsi's sister, was got out of the way some years later. Tze-Hsi is one of those "charming women" who brook no rival near the throne, and that both her sister and her son's wife were made to die by her orders it is impossible to doubt.

But before she succeeded in placing another baby on the throne of China there occurred one of those dramatic episodes of which Li's long life seems unusually full. A Chinese tells the story thus:—

There was a formidable party in the palace opposed to the two Dowager-Empresses, anxious to put them and their party out of the way, and raise to the Throne a dissolute son of Prince Kung, since dead. The Dowager-Empress appealed to Li, then Viceroy of Chihli, and as such the lawful protector of the dynasty. He did not lose a moment [looking over Li's long life, that seems to have been one of the secrets of it; he never did delay unless he wanted to, and then none could better play a waiting game]. On this occasion Li made a secret forced march to Peking accompanied by his personal guard of 4,000 well armed men, horse, foot, and artillery, all Anhui men, on whose devotion he could rely under any circumstances. The march of eighty miles was made in thirty-six hours, and timed to

arrive at Peking at midnight. A prince who was an adherent of the Dowager-Empress had been placed in charge of the Chungwen Gate with a guard of his personal retainers, under orders to open it only to Li and his force. At midnight Li and his Anhui men were admitted, and marched into the Forbidden City in dead silence, every man holding a chopstick in his mouth to prevent his talking, and with the metal trappings of the horses all muffled. Arrived within the Forbidden precincts, the Manchu bannermen on duty at the various palace gates were all replaced by Li's men, the Empresses having sent out eunuchs to point out which detachments were doubtful, or had almost openly declared for the conspirators. These were at once disarmed, bound, and hurried off to the prisons of the Board of Punishments. The artillery was posted to command the entrances to the Forbidden City, the cavalry were set to patrol the grounds and pick up any stray conspirators who could be found, and the infantry were stationed so as to surround the palace where lay the Dowager-Empresses and the present Emperor, Kwang-Hsü, then a child of about four years old. When day broke the surprise of such of the conspirators as had not been arrested during the night was complete. The disaffected were quietly made away with, or sent into perpetual exile in the Heilungchang region, and the next day Prince Chun's little son was proclaimed Emperor, with the title of Kwang-Hsü. It turned out that neither Prince Kung nor his son had any connection with the conspiracy, and they were unharmed, Prince Kung remaining, as he always had been, a staunch friend of Li. Everything being settled, Li marched back to Tientsin with his troops, as unostentatiously as he had come, and so secretly had everything been done that only those directly concerned in this *coup d'état* knew what had happened, or how entirely it was due to the loyalty and promptitude of Li—who might at that moment, if he had chosen to be false, have raised himself to the throne—that a civil war was averted and a great and bloody tragedy prevented. The Empress-Dowager has never forgotten her debt to the Viceroy, and it is only due to her entreaties and her representations that the stability of the dynasty depends still on him, that His Excellency has consented to take up his post in the Tsungli Yamen, the Emperor, it is said, being so much under the influence of Weng Tung-ho that he has never realised what he owes to his great subject.

This is the story of Li's great midnight march, so often

referred to as the means by which he won for all time the Empress Tze-Hsi's favour; but the fact that she appealed to him looks a little as if he already enjoyed it. On the expedition to the tombs there must have been many opportunities of intercourse.

And probably these two gauged each other's characters from the outset.

CHAPTER IX.

DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCES (1873—1876).

In February, 1873, Ministers from Japan and Peru and the Chargé d'Affaires from Holland were all expected to arrive at Tientsin as soon as the ice melted sufficiently to allow the opening of sea communication, and Li considered it necessary that he should be on the spot to receive them. But one delay after another occurred, and it was only in July, after his visit to Peking, that the memorable interview took place in which the Japanese Commissioner calmly and with dignity flouted and set at naught the most overbearing of China's Viceroys.

The Japanese doubtless fully knew the character of the man he had to deal with, and had possibly also heard that Li had on several occasions declared his intention not to permit him to go to Peking; so he was very gracious, very civilly announced that he had been appointed by the Government of Japan to reside in Peking, courteously expressed how he was looking forward to seeing that most interesting city, but said never a word about Formosa, the question at issue. A Japanese vessel had been cast ashore there and the crew murdered. At first the Chinese Government had short-sightedly declared they could not restrain the savages of Formosa. The Japanese had immediately landed a force to do so, and now he (Soyeshima) was on his way to Peking to explain and settle matters. Li began at once to discuss the difficulty; though whether it is authentic that he handed Soyeshima a slip of paper with a quotation from Confucius concerning the "lawless encroachments of one State upon the territory of another," and that the Japanese received it with

apparent indifference, I am not prepared to say. Anyway, after Li had exhausted himself in eloquence, the Japanese said simply that he had only "called to pay his respects, not to discuss international affairs—that he had been accredited to the Chinese Government at Peking," and was then on his way thither.

We can then imagine the solemnity of that exasperatingly self-possessed Japanese bow we all know so well, with its final smile, and the state of mind in which great big Li must have been left—doubtless mentally boiling over. The lesson was a wholesome one, and probably Li never again displayed such want of tact and judgment. His declared intention had been to stop the Japanese Minister from proceeding to Peking, and he must have felt very keenly mortified, for he did not even return the Minister's call, sending a deputy to say he was suddenly indisposed. Li's sudden indispositions got to be so well known that in the end, when he lay dying, people hardly believed that he was really ill. Thus in the first encounter of wits Japan came off victorious, and after a vacillation and helplessness painful to behold—so that Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister, who was asked to mediate, could not tell what it was really intended to do—the Chinese consented to pay the expenses of the Japanese invasion of Formosa. These in the end, in proper business fashion, were whittled down from 3,000,000 taels to 500,000; and as the Chinese would not consent to pay this down at once, nor the Japanese to give them credit, Sir Thomas Wade, in the interests of peace, advanced the money. Thus there was no Japanese war in 1874, at which people at the time thought Li was disappointed. And perhaps, indeed, it would have been better for China if there had been.

The indemnity was to be paid out of the revenues of the Foochow and Tientsin customs, but before all this was settled Li had another set down. For the Japanese Ambassador Okubo, accompanied by Admiral Ito, General Le Gendro, and a large body of attendants, spent six days in Tientsin in September, 1874, without even paying a visit

to Li Hung-chang; this being the first instance in which a Minister, or Ambassador, accredited to Peking, had ever passed Tientsin without a visit of ceremony or a friendly salutation of some kind to the Viceroy.

It is said that no single event, since the occupation of Tientsin by the allied army in 1860, had awakened such a profound and universal feeling amongst the officials of the province as the advent of this Embassy from Japan. The party occupied sixteen houseboats, and each boat displayed the national flag as it filed slowly through the shipping and past the bridge of boats and so on up the Peiho, that river that is for ever turning round to look at itself and almost tying itself in knots. The grand style in which the Ambassador came to Tientsin made an immense impression on the Chinese. One large ironclad, which the Chinese said had on board 3,000 men (!), brought the Embassy to the Taku outer anchorage; a fine gun-boat brought it from thence to Tientsin; and the Ambassador was accompanied by several secretaries and attachés, besides a host of servants.

It would seem that from the first the Japanese did not think Li's friendship worth cultivating. Is it an indication that another nation did that we find the following in the Shanghai newspaper?—

Oct. 27th, 1874.—This afternoon, Li Hung-chang, the Governor-General of Chihli, made a visit to the Russian gunboat lying off this settlement. After his Excellency had been on board for about an hour, the commander of the gunboat exploded a torpedo sunk in the river off his vessel, raising the water some forty feet in the air, while the ground on the bank shook; and the shock was similarly felt at the British Consulate, near which the gunboat is moored. The Viceroy had a salute of fifteen guns given him on his arrival.

Some day, one cannot help thinking, the world will have progressed sufficiently for people to marvel at this nineteenth century idea of entertaining a foreign potentate or notability by showing him how well prepared we are to blow him and his into eternity. As it is we all do it. So we must not blame the Russians.

Besides his diplomatic difficulties, Li at this period had a good deal of trouble with his own soldiers—some 60,000 troops, within two days' march of Tientsin, condemned to inactivity in a province in which they were as much strangers as if they were foreigners. There was a conspiracy among them led by one of the Viceroy's late officers; a large number of ex-military officers were understood to be ready to join; and a great body of soldiers from the South prepared to come over to them as soon as the signal for revolt should be given. There was serious disaffection among the troops in the large military camp at Hsin-ch'eng, on the south bank of the Peiho, sixteen miles above Taku; several hundreds of the men had deserted the camp; and so great was the consternation amongst the commandants of the Taku forts that every preparation had been made for an assault upon their works by the rebels, which was daily and hourly expected.

The intention of the insurgents was to march upon Tientsin simultaneously from both the camps, capture and hold the place, and put all the foreigners to death. A letter giving the above information was intercepted, and the facts were immediately sent to Li Hung-chang, who issued prompt orders for the apprehension of a number of suspected people. It was the expectation of the leaders that, as soon as the rebel standard should be hoisted over the walls of Tientsin, the whole body of Li Hung-chang's Southern soldiery would join them, as they were known to be exceedingly hostile to foreigners. The Viceroy's detectives were soon upon the scent, seven of the ringleaders were arrested at an obscure Chinese inn near the western suburbs of the city, and, on the day following, six more were brought in irons from the camp, escorted by a strong body of soldiers from the Viceroy's guard. The leader of the revolt made good his escape.

The badge adopted by these rebels was a white turban, and their standard a white flag bearing the inscription Hsin An. Quite a number of these flags were captured. It was a singular fact in connection with the affair that the local officials professed entire ignorance of what was going on.

On which a Tientsin correspondent, from whose account I have gathered these details, takes occasion to give this contemporary estimate of Li Hung-chang:—

> Every confidence is felt in the Viceroy's fidelity toward foreigners in this movement. Whatever may be its extent or results, there is no doubt as to the position of Li Hung-chang. His loyalty to the present dynasty, his courage, and his ability to deal with refractory subjects, give great promise of a satisfactory solution of this troublesome looking affair. But from the knowledge of Chinese character which past experience has given us, it would seem the part of wisdom to keep ourselves in readiness, prepared to defend ourselves, without depending too much upon others.

Thus it would seem that already even foreigners in China were forgetting the murder of the Wangs and once more were reposing confidence in Li Hung-chang.

Soon after this occurred the murder of the interpreter Margary. It might be thought that a crime committed in far away Yunnan could not possibly concern Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Chihli and superintendent of trade in the Northern Provinces. But although Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister, had just received expressions of gratitude from Prince Kung and his colleagues, for his mediation for them with the Japanese, yet, when he decided to send Mr. Grosvenor from the British Legation to Yunnan to inquire into this murder, they contented themselves with desiring Li Hung-chang to appoint an officer to accompany him. Dilatoriness was the order of the day. The man selected by Li was of such low rank, that pressure had to be brought to bear on the Viceroy, who at length replaced him by his own brother, Li Han-chang. The latter then so delayed that, though Sir Thomas Wade left Peking for Shanghai, so as to telegraph home more conveniently, and Mr. Grosvenor started up the Yangtse, yet the latter returned to his chief and Sir Thomas to Tientsin, without having arranged anything. At Tientsin, of course, Sir Thomas found Li only too ready to enter into negotiations with him, as he had been with the Japanese Commissioner. Sir Thomas Wade succumbed, and

talked over the whole business, beginning with the very unsatisfactory conduct of Li's brother, and laying down five demands, which must, he urged, be granted by the Chinese Government in the first place. Li was liberal of assurances that he would urge his brother to lose no more time in setting out for Yunnan, and also that he would advise the Tsungli Yamên, or Chinese Board of Foreign Affairs, to receive Sir Thomas Wade's proposals favourably. The Yamên, however, in the first instance, stood upon their dignity, declaring it to be contrary to custom for Chinese officials, not charged with the management of foreign affairs, to meddle with them; and they objected to Li's having held intercourse with a foreign Minister accredited to Peking. They also objected to sending an envoy to England, as Sir Thomas wished, saying the matter had been for some time under discussion, and "no suitable persons being forthcoming for the moment, it had been impossible to carry it into immediate execution."

Sir Thomas Wade was just about to return to Peking when Li persuaded him to wait a few days, declaring he had received a copy of a decree instructing him and another official to confer with the British Minister. In a few days the decree arrived, not couched in the usual language of the *Peking Gazette*, but saying simply: "Let Li Hung-chang and Ting Jih-ch'ang negotiate respecting the Margary affair with the British Minister, Mr. Wade, at Tientsin, as he is on the spot, with a view to satisfactory results." A dispatch from Prince Kung also stated that Mr. Wade "can without hesitation confer and take action with their excellencies Li and Ting." Li seems to have been most agreeable, but whatever he promised the Yamên refused to endorse; one of the Assistant Grand Secretaries saying "that it did not follow that what His Excellency, Li, might guarantee at Tientsin was to be given effect to at Peking."

The worst feature in the whole business was that Tsên, Governor of Yunnan, and thus naturally one of the accused parties, was appointed to help Li Hung-chang in his investigations. Tsên, whose son has been made Viceroy of Szechuan and Canton successively, as being one of the very

few men in the Empire adequately fitted to cope with rebellion, was one of the aboriginal race of Kwangsi, perhaps the source of the Chinese people, and had acquired great reputation by his method of suppressing the Mahomedan rebellion in Yunnan. "To save the trouble of burying many thousands of old people and children he had them buried in the Tali Lake." The Military Governor in after life used to say it was not really 10,000 but 3,000 that were treated after this fashion—the same which the Russians under General Gribsky employed along the Amur in 1900. When at the time the Military Governor remonstrated, saying that such severity was contrary to Tao Li (good principle), Tsên, the Governor, had replied: "You have nothing to do with Tao Li (good principles); you have only to do with the Lü Li (the penal code)." It was this man who now had to investigate a crime committed under his own jurisdiction, and for which, in accordance with Chinese custom, he should himself have been held responsible. From the Governor-General downwards officials are each and all individually and collectively held responsible for all that may happen in the limits of their jurisdiction. Sir Thomas Wade decided that the Governor had instigated the murder, and demanded that he should be brought for trial to Peking. The Peking Government refused to listen, and at last produced a report from the Governor-General himself, making out, after the usual Chinese fashion, that certain of his subordinates, whom he seemed ready to give up, were the culprits. Sir Thomas Wade threatened to haul down his flag if such a misleading report were published,

Sir Thomas had already seen that Li had been trying all the while to fool him—it can hardly be expressed otherwise—for not only had Li made promises, that had been at once repudiated by the Yamên, but at his suggestion, as was generally understood, a man called Sieh had been appointed to help his brother Li Han-chang. Now this man, years before, when the conflict between Li and Burgevine had been at its height, had been sent to Peking by Li to represent his views, and had been by Sir Frederick Bruce denounced as an enemy to foreigners and a confirmed mischief-maker.

And so aware were the Chinese governors of the British objection to him, that they did not even insert the decree appointing Sieh in the *Peking Gazette* till six months afterwards.

The Chinese particularly excel in entangling people in complicated negotiations, and to quote from Dr. Michie, "the British Minister became entangled in a cat's cradle of negotiations for the revision of the treaty of Tientsin, with which the Yunnan outrage got so mixed up that the different questions never could be, or at any rate never were, separated again." The great question to the Chinese mind was, would the English fight if no reparation were offered? "Prince Kung, when he realised that the British Minister had actually left the capital suddenly, became serious, and sent after him to say there had been a misunderstanding." He took counsel with Mr. (now Sir) Robert Hart as to what were really the intentions of the English, and after the Grand Secretary, Li, had failed to detain Sir Thomas Wade at Tientsin, Mr. Hart, Inspector General of Chinese Maritime Customs, was sent after him to Shanghai, "ostensibly to discuss the commercial question, but really to induce the British Minister to re-enter the arena of negotiation, in which the Chinese felt themselves safe;" Li Hung-chang being appointed High Commissioner.

Thus the *personnel* of the piece was unaltered, only the scene being shifted; Wade himself having selected Chefoo, that favourite summer sea resort, as the place of meeting, for which it was specially suited, in August and September. For some reason or other, the Ministers of no less than seven foreign Powers found themselves assembled in 1876 at this usually quiet summer resort, in addition to two British admirals. The occasion led to much interchange of visits, both afloat and ashore; and to the clever Li occurred the happy idea of uniting the entire diplomatic body at a banquet given at his temporary lodging-place, the Swatow Guildhouse, on Aug. 30th. Owing to the limited nature of the accommodation, the number of the European guests was strictly confined to the members of the

diplomatic circle and the two British admirals. The entertainment consisted of a dinner in both Chinese and European styles, in alternate courses; and the company was composed of the following fifteen individuals, viz.:—Sir Thomas Wade, the Ministers of Russia, Germany, the United States, France, Spain, and Austria, Vice-Admiral Ryder, Rear-Admiral Lambert, R.N., the Secretary of the Spanish Legation, and Mr. F. Mayers (Chinese Secretary of the British Legation), together with Li Hung-chang as host, and the Chinese Envoy-Designate to Great Britain (Hsu Ch'ien-shen), and two other Chinese.

The banquet was very magnificent, and towards its close it became understood that Li was prepared to propose a toast in the foreign fashion. A short speech, which he had himself drafted in Chinese, had been translated into English, and was read to the assembled company by Mr. Tong King-sing:—

I now wish to thank my guests for the honour and the pleasure they have conferred upon me in assembling to partake of this poor repast.

I have heretofore enjoyed the gratification of meeting from time to time most of my guests now present, but I have met them singly at different places. The increased pleasure of meeting them collectively, and enjoying a few hours of pleasant intercourse free from the restraints of public business, has been denied me until this time.

Here, at this port of Yen-tai, beautiful scenery delights the eye and cool breezes give health to the body; it is fitting, therefore, that our minds should be in harmony with the beauties of Nature, cultivating friendship and sincerity as being the noblest traits of human character.

And applying the same principle to our official duties, I sincerely hope that the nations here represented may always dwell in peace and friendship with each other, like brothers living together; for an ancient sage of China has said that "all within the four seas are brothers."

I therefore propose this sentiment, as coupled with the health of the distinguished guests who grace my table.

The speech cannot be considered a bad one, though it does not equal those Sir Chih Chew Lo Feng Lu was in

the habit of delivering for Li during his quasi-Imperial progress round the world; and is more noticeably Chinese in sentiment with its reference to the beauties of nature as predisposing men to cultivate friendship and sincerity. Are these the two noblest traits of human character? It always appears as if Chinese placed friendship far higher than we do; they are more definite as to its duties. "What are the duties of a friend?" I once asked a Chinese Secretary of Legation, and he replied off-hand: "Why to stand by his friend in adversity, and to admonish him if he be tempted to act amiss." It will be noticed also that Li, like so many foreigners since, quoted the Chinese saying, "All within the four seas are brothers." Now, although one sinologue differs from another sinologue, so that it is difficult to affirm anything positively about the Chinese language, yet I have understood that the phrase, "within the four seas," means simply "in China"—which the Chinese generally think comprises all the world worth mentioning, the rest consisting merely of wild border tribes, who occasionally rebel and give trouble; so that this fine sentence from the Classics means no more than that all Chinese are brothers, though now Chinese themselves often use it as signifying the brotherhood of all mankind.

Li's own (official) view of the whole business is presented in his report, as follows:—

Oct. 5th, 1876.—The writer presents a memorial requesting the issue of a Decree. He would humbly recall the fact that in the sixth moon of the thirteenth year of the reign of T'ung Chi (May—June, 1874), the British Minister residing in Peking proposed to the Yamên of Foreign Affairs, in accordance with precedent, to issue passports duly sealed, under which an official mission from India might enter Yunnan by way of Burmah, and the Interpreter Margary might be sent to meet it; also to write letters informing the provincial Governments along the line, as well as to the Governor-General and Governor of Yunnan.

It was in course of time stated by the British Minister that, in January, 1875, the Interpreter Margary had reached Bhamo in Burma, and, having there met Colonel Browne and the rest of the

party sent from India, was returning through the Yunnan country, when on the 21st February, 1875, he, the Interpreter Margary, was murdered at Man-wyne, a place which he had reached in the jurisdiction of Momein. On the 22nd February, Colonel Browne and the rest were attacked and driven back by an armed force.

In the 5th moon of the same year, your Majesties despatched Li Han-chang, Governor-General of Hu Kuang, to make inquiry and take action, and the ex-Vice-president Sieh Huan was sent to act with him. The British Minister at the same time sent Grosvenor, Secretary of Legation, with other officers, whom he had selected, that they might be present at the investigation.

In March, 1876, Li Han-chang and his colleague, having completed their inquiry, reported to the effect that the murder of the Interpreter Margary was the act of savages, who had demanded blackmail of him *; that he had refused to pay it, and had been killed by them in consequence; and that it was at the instigation of Li Chen-kuo, the military officer (a major) at Nan-tien, since cashiered, that his fellow-travellers had been stopped. The case being one affecting foreign relations, they (the Commissioners) did not think it well to take on themselves to award a sentence, and they prayed your Majesties to instruct the Tsungli Yamên to confer with the Board of Punishment and to report their joint opinion. Your Majesties having been pleased to signify approval of this course, a copy of the Decree, reverently made, was communicated by the Tsungli Yamên to the British Minister, to whom were also forwarded copies of the memorial of Li Han-chang and his colleague, with copies of depositions and letters. And whereas the depositions of Li Chen-kuo, now cashiered, and the other prisoners, supplied trustworthy evidence against them, the proper course would have been to award such penalty as, after reference to the laws of China, the prisoners should be found severally to deserve. The British Minister, however, has handed in a memorandum prepared by him, in which he states that having carefully considered the report of the secretary, Grosvenor, and those with him, he is of opinion that, although, by the laws of China, there might be ground sufficient for the conviction of Li Chen-kuo and the others whom Li Han-chang and his colleague have pronounced on the depositions and other evidence before them, to be the principals in this case, the prisoners, if the evidence were

* This was a pure invention.

tested by the laws of England, would not, in his belief, be held to have been justly convicted; that the punishment of the persons above mentioned, consequently, so far from being regarded as acceptable in England, would, on the contrary, but too probably excite mistrust and apprehension. The persons murdered and driven back in this case (the British Minister observes) were British officers, and inasmuch as Western civilisation teaches that punishment of the past is not of so great consequence as security for the future, he urges that the parties in this case now awaiting sentence be not punished.

Your servant, having, in obedience to your Majesty's decree, repaired to Yen-t'ai to confer with the British Minister, would submit that, as the laws of China and the West differ from each other, and as there is a corresponding difference between their modes of proceeding, the sentences that would otherwise have been passed should be modified so as to meet the exigencies of the case. Chiang Tsung-han, general of the division of Teng-yueh, T'ing (Momein), and Wu-ch'i-liang, sub-prefect of that jurisdiction, have already been cashiered. They need not therefore be taken farther account of. As regards Li Chen-kuo, the major cashiered, with Erh T'ung Wu, La Tu, and the others, eleven in number, if there be no impropriety in the request, the memorialist would respectfully pray your Gracious Majesties, as an exceptional instance of humanity beyond the prescription of the law, to deign to accord the request of the British Minister, and as an act of indulgence to consider the possibility of granting remission of their sentences. Prostrate he awaits the decision of your Sacred Majesties.

He reflects at the same time that by the murder of the Interpreter Margary, he being an officer sent on a mission by a friendly Power, and provided with a passport, and by the repulse of the officers with him, a wound could not fail to have been inflicted upon the relations of amity existing between the two countries; while with the deep interest taken by your Majesties in foreign relations your Majesties cannot but have felt deeply concerned thereat. He proposes accordingly to request your Majesties to issue for publication in the capital and the provinces a Decree, the promulgation of which may dissipate misgiving in the public mind.

China and other nations having long since made treaties with each other, religious observance of which is equally incumbent on

both sides, the Tsungli Yamên in the 9th moon of last year presented a memorial praying for a more perfect exposition of the provisions of the treaties; and a circular was written by it to the provincial governments reminding them of the provision under which foreigners travelling with passports are entitled to protection, and enjoining on them a special attention to the meaning of the treaties in this regard, and the duty of action in conformity therewith, as differing circumstances might require. And it is the writer's duty to request that a Decree may now be issued directing the governor-general and governors to obey with awe your Majesties' Decree of the 9th October, 1875, and once more to issue strict orders to their subordinates with reverence to second the desire of the Government to keep on terms of amity with friendly States, and to remember that whenever a foreigner is travelling in the interior with a passport, they must act towards him in respect of his treaty right, as the treaty requires; that he must be duly protected; that if any serious harm befall him in consequence of their omission to take proper precaution, the authorities of the province concerned will be held responsible; that in every prefecture, sub-prefecture, and district, proclamations are to be posted, so that every household may know the relation in which the Chinese and foreigners stand to each other. This done, misunderstandings will be certain not to occur; should your Majesties honour the above proposition with your approval, it will be for the Tsungli Yamên to draft the proclamation that is to be sent to the provincial Governments for their guidance. Whether the course suggested in this memorial for the termination of the Yunnan affair be worthy of adoption or not, the writer humbly beseeches their Majesties the Empresses Dowager and the Emperor, when they shall have perused it, to signify.

Thus, according to Li, the guilt "of notoriously innocent parties was assumed but their pardon granted," on the ground that the evidence against them would not convict them according to British law, whereas all that Li was seeking was to screen the redoubtable Tsên, Governor of Yunnan, and the other high officials implicated. In order to carry his point he tried Sir Thomas Wade's plan of going away; to secure the signature of the Convention, it proved only necessary for Li to threaten that he would leave Chefoo on a certain day

whether it were signed or not. So the Chefoo convention was signed, extending the area of internal taxation, preparing for an increase in the opium revenue, opening certain new ports, and embodying a very remarkable arrangement about Chungking, the great commercial centre of the rich west of China: "The British Government will further be free to send officers to reside at Chungking to watch the conditions of British trade in Szechuan. British merchants will not be allowed to reside at Chungking, or to open establishments or warehouses there, so long as no steamers have access to the port. When steamers have succeeded in ascending the river so far, further arrangements can be taken into consideration."

This was signed on September 13th, 1876, and I little thought how much of my own life was to revolve round and round and in and out of these surely most unnecessarily involved phrases drawn up by Sir Thomas Wade and Li Hung-chang! It is believed that the idea in Sir Thomas's mind was that his compatriots were recklessly enterprising, and that if they went and resided at Chungking, 1,500 miles up the river Yangtse, they might get all massacred or otherwise ill used; whereby Great Britain might find itself entangled into sending an expeditionary force through the far-famed Yangtse gorges. At the same time he did not like to preclude his countrymen from ever trading there, so he made the proviso that when steamers had access to the port, British merchants might also have it. We are to see these clauses again modified later; the Port of Chungking being proclaimed open, and British steamers expressly shut out. What idea prompted that arrangement I have never heard from anyone. The French saying is: "Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée," but somehow the British Foreign Office in after years thought it possible for Chungking port to be both open and shut at the same time.

Thus did Sir Thomas Wade accept money for the murder of Margary—200,000 taels—and do many other things it would seem as if he had better not have done. But it must be remembered that he had consented to treat with Li, as the Japanese had steadfastly refused to do, and that Li had

the benefit of Sir Robert Hart's advice and help. Nor do we know how far the ministers of other Powers, so many of whom happened to be at Chefoo at this time, may have assisted him also. Remarkable at all events was Li's ingenuity in making it appear that the whole matter was one of the British begging the Chinese not to punish certain people whom British law did not consider quite rightly condemned, and of the Chinese issuing a declaration of religious toleration; which last, the first apparently spontaneous manifesto of the kind ever issued by the always tolerant, non-persecuting Chinese, excited some stir at the time in Peking.

It is noticeable, also, that the two Englishmen who have longest retained the confidence of their Chinese employers, Sir Robert Hart and Sir Halliday Macartney, are both men of very calm, somewhat reticent character, men who could not be moved to hasty anger and impatient words, and that both Gordon and Sir Thomas Wade were emphatically of the opposite type. The Chinese have always a great dislike to people who show "ch'i," a term, perhaps, better Englished as excitability than anger. This is often believed to be part of the objection of domestics to serving mistresses instead of masters.

Anyway, it is impossible to read the account of this Chefoo convention and not be struck by the resemblance between Li, at the age of 54, when he may be said to have been at his very best, and Bismarck; Li's enjoyment of life, his brusque geniality, his impressive personality, his absolute freedom from scruples, and his astute wariness as to carrying his own ends, all recalling the great German statesman. So far untainted by intercourse with European promoters, Li at this period of his career may surely be considered a great Chinese statesman. The secretary of the Navy League, then a midshipman on Admiral Ryder's ship, remembers vividly the impression Li created when he came on board the Flagship with two hundred official followers; his majestic height, his dignified bearing, his piercing eyes that seemed to see everything at once, all combining to make an ineffaceable impression.

CHAPTER X.

CHANG CHIH-TUNG, THE INCORRUPTIBLE.

It was about this time (that is to say, 1876), that a rival of Li Hung-chang, a very noteworthy person, began to attract public attention.

Chang Chih-tung is a man of very different calibre from Li; as remarkable for his small size as Li for his great stature, as noted for his incorruptibility as Li for his avarice. Chang Chih-tung is a far greater scholar than Li, though the latter was by Chinese esteemed for his learning. But Chang Chih-tung's literary style is considered the finest in the Empire unless with the solitary exception of that of Liang, the Reformer, for some years the editor of *Chinese Progress*, whose style displays so classical a finish that the Chinese often shed tears over his compositions simply from admiration of their beauty. Chang Chih-tung is probably more respected by that very important body the Literati of China than any other man; and his relations seem to be generally men of learning like himself—men who will not take bribes, and are consequently disliked by other officials unable to emulate an example of such purity, but who are all esteemed though possibly dreaded in their respective spheres.

Mr. Michie has said that his many fantastic schemes "would in any Western country have relegated their author to the custody of the Commissioners of Lunacy." And he instances Chang Chih-tung's scheme "to prevent foreign ships from entering the Gulf of Pecheli by sinking tiers of junks between Shantung and Talien-wan"; and his plan for catching the Japanese soldiers "in a gigantic locust trap, consisting of a deep trench to be dug at their landing place." But Mr.

Michie seems, in this instance, hardly to have remembered the schemes which really have been made use of successfully by Chinese in their internal warfare; as, for instance, that of Chu Ko-liang, who, being short of arrows, piled up bundles of straw on boats, and let them drift slowly past the enemy's troops. Underneath, a few soldiers were sheltered, beating drums assiduously. Consequently the enemy so energetically pelted them with arrows, which stuck comfortably in the straw, that Chu Ko-liang was soon plentifully supplied again. Again, on the Upper Yangtse, Meng Liang cut square holes, still to be seen, on the surface of one of the most precipitous cliffs in the Yangtse Gorges, and fixing the ends of beams in them led his army up the flight of steps thus constructed in the face of an inaccessible cliff; so in the night surprising the enemy's army, comfortably encamped at the top, fearing no danger. This flight of steps is to this day called Meng Liang's ladder. Chinese history teems with instances of the kind, and it cannot be thought unnatural that Chang Chih-tung, no soldier but an erudite scholar, should at first have thought that such expedients, which had succeeded brilliantly in the past, might suit the present age. Mr. Michie admits that Chang Chih-tung's much ridiculed ironworks at Hanyang have produced iron used for making rails. He might have added that Chang Chih-tung's clothworks have turned out admirable calico, and that he alone of Chinese viceroys made a carriage road through his city whilst at Nanking, thus introducing carriages and jinrickshas there. He has also introduced jinrickshas into Wuchang, when moved to that viceroyalty, and has established innumerable colleges of agriculture and the like; a record so far unique among those of Chinese viceroys, and fairly good for a man supposed not to be practical.

In 1876 Chang Chih-tung was only literary Chancellor in Szechuan, and the memorial that first brought him into notice is so remarkable, I think it well to give it here in its entirety. It will make the reader better appreciate the intense dislike and contempt entertained by Chinese

for foreigners, and better enable him to understand what a man like Li had to overcome in himself and contend against in others. With the alteration of a word or two, the translation is by Mr. Clement Allen, late Consul-General, and a great Chinese scholar. Wherever I can I seek to give the original writings of Chinese, reproducing their turns of thought as the best indications of their character, but am always indebted for the translations to the *North China Herald.*

Your servant, Chang Chih-tung, presents this memorial on his knees. Your servant has always heard that Chinese and barbarians cannot exist in the same spot, and that no part of your Majesty's realm can be properly shared with others. He, therefore, begs the Government will not forget its former injuries, and that the disgrace inflicted by feudatories may be washed out. We must assent to the will of Heaven above, and conform to the wishes of men on earth below, but the Government should assert the majesty of its warlike might, in order to drive away the hordes of fierce and cruel men. We know that the dispositions of these outer barbarians are as ravenous as those of wolves. They manufacture opium, which they exchange for our useful silver and gold, that they may fill up their bottomless abysses with it. This opium drives away all feeling of shame among the black-haired race, and ruins the energies of our soldiers and their officers. The late Emperor, well knowing the malignity and wickedness of foreigners, and furious and terribly indignant thereat, ordered his high military officials to go to the Pearl river. They burnt the opium, and detained the ships of the barbarians. There was good reason for the employment of this military force. Who was not delighted, or who failed to express his admiration? However, Keshen proved to be a man of no resource, and he was mad enough to enter into an armistice with them, to the injury and disgrace of the military commanders; on his own responsibility he cut off a slice of territory, and sold the commanding position of Tiger Island, which formed a natural protection, and thus these robbers became outrageous. Their demands became more and more insatiable. Again and again they brought out their murderous and savage soldiery. They took Hongkong, and laid hands on Nanking. They enticed a general there, and had him killed before them as they feasted.

Possibly some of the stories we believe of Chinese are no truer than this:—

They pounced upon a high commissioner (Yeh Ming Ch'eng) and carried him off to a foreign country. Their crimes and offences are notorious. The case is one that cannot be expiated even by death. Notwithstanding this, the late Emperor made a treaty of peace with them, and consented to their proposals for commercial intercourse, which shows the vast benevolence of our great Government. Your servant, turning to former memorials on these subjects, sighs to think of the mistakes which were committed in that one moment. After this the flame of rebellion [literally smoke and miasma], sprang up on all sides in China, and the barbarians on this entertained yet viler schemes than before. They fomented strife and turned their backs on treaties. They came to a seaport (Tientsin), and we turned our sailors into fighting men; but the barbarians, once more lucky beyond their deserts, crossed by land. Fortunately we had San-ko-lin-sin, who was thoroughly acquainted with strategy, and who advanced boldly. He devised plans for driving them back to their own country. He placed good soldiers in ambush to protect the stations on the coast. If we could have had the luck to have once met in arms success must have followed, and the barbarians would have lost courage. Who could have foreseen that two camps would have caught fire, and that our troops would have been routed? The barbarians thereupon swarmed in everywhere, like moths or ants, and crept out here and there like so many frogs and insects. They suddenly forced their way past our stations and invaded our sacred demesnes; they burnt our pleasure gardens, and spied out our cities and country places. The (very) rivers and hills changed colour. The Imperial chariot was forced to leave. The light of the stars paled. The Emperor retreated on his charger. This surely is an injury which will not admit of our both existing under the same skies. The Emperor and his Ministers cannot forget this in a moment.

Now, again, the barbarians want people to believe in them, and to make further compacts, that they may entice persons into their depraved faith. They set up stations and erect buildings, in which they place handsome platforms [altars or pulpits], and make use of magic arts to entrap men. An awe-inspiring government submits to a barbarous nation. Your servant grieves day and night

thinking over the vast internal injury to his country, which must mainly be caused by such ignorant and foolish persons. As good luck would have it, they have lately been guilty of the crime of kidnapping men, and of the sin of injuring the people. The awful indignation of heaven has been excited, and the people disturbed, so that they have pulled down the churches and driven away their congregation.

If the Government will take advantage of this opportunity, while the hearts of the people are inflamed, they should send official circulars in all directions, informing everyone of the evil propensities of foreigners, that the indignation of all may be aroused, and that those who have been deluded astray may be overawed. Let the High Provincial authorities be instructed to burn all foreign churches, and lead on the people to exterminate this wicked brood. This would have the effect, on the one hand, of removing the objects of the two late Emperors' hatred, and, on the other, of educating the minds of the populace. There is no doubt this question affects our prosperity or ruin. We must not, therefore, miss the opportunity.

If, on the other hand, the officials are stupid enough to unite in making amicable advances, so that the Government gives its consent, and nobody ventures to say a word about fighting, then it will follow that the people of China are to blame, and the officials will have the duty of punishing them. Those who give way to the barbarians will then be meritorious officers, and those who resist and oppose them will all be considered a traitorous set, to the destruction of the good reputation of China, and to the furtherance of the malicious designs of these veritable birds and beasts. Your servant fears that the wicked men will thus grow more and more numerous every day, and that honest Ministers will all be driven away. This will not only compel the people to join depraved sects, but will be tantamount to taking the Imperial revenues and letting barbarians use them for the support of their religious ideas, which would indeed be a pitiable proceeding.

Your servant has been a student ever since his queue was first plaited, and although he is not deeply read, he would request that the following examples of evil resulting from conceding treaties of peace may be laid before the Government:—

In the time of Yuan Ti, of the Han dynasty (B.C. 48), the Hsiung-nu invaded and ravaged the country. The Government

just at that time had plenty of soldiers and a sufficiency of provisions. Still, they would not heed the good counsels of Chao Chien, but listened to the evil designs of Wen Hsiang, and, to begin with, gave the Emperor's daughter, Shou Yang, in marriage to the invader. After that the Emperor's concubine, Wang Chiang, went over to the enemy; but, nevertheless, after a lapse of a few years, the Capital was once more plundered by him.

In the times of the Emperors Huei Tsung and Chin Tsung, of the Sung dynasty (A.D. 1101–1126), the inhabitants of Chin invaded and ravaged the country. The Government at that time had plenty of soldiers and quantities of officers, nevertheless they would not listen to the good advice of Yo Fei, but yielded to the evil designs of Chin Kuei, and in the first place gave pearls and precious stones to sue for peace, and afterwards presented the enemy with land and property to keep him quiet. But before many years had elapsed, the Emperor wanted a piece of ground left to him, and he could not get it. Again, among the barbarous countries beyond sea, there is Cochin-China to the north and Laos to the south. The former made a treaty and became a dependent state; the latter would make no treaty, and remains independent. A thorough examination of all ancient instances shows them to be all of the same pattern; why should not our Government take warning by them?

There exist at present seven reasons why we should decide on going to war:—

1. Foreigners can only fight with success in the summer. We can fight during any of the four seasons, so we have the weather on our side.

2. They can only fight with success at sea. We can defend the land. The land, therefore, is an element on which we can rely.

3. They excite the anger of the people. We satisfy the people's minds. We can reckon on the goodwill of the people.

4. Besides, they live in an outside state. We live in the Central nation. Are we not a match for them in numbers?

5. They believe in Jesus, we in Confucius and Mencius. These faiths differ as truth and falsehood.

6. They have to find rations. We have our supply of provisions. This makes all the difference between strength and weakness.

7. They come from a long way off, and suffer accordingly from

many infirmities. We are safe at home, and so are not afflicted at all, and can therefore wait till they are exhausted.

Their plans are drawn up jointly by the two countries (England and France). Our soldiers and people form one family. United we may count on victory. Reason demands we should go to war; circumstances admit of our so doing. Consider these seven reasons; there is not a single woman or child who cannot appreciate them.

Now, the Ministers whom we have are men full of learning, and our literati have a universal reputation as clear-minded scholars; should they all give a unanimous vote for peace, your servant, alas! can guess the reason. It is that they, knowing the tender age of your Majesty, and the feeble and embarrassed state in which the soldiers and people are, and acquainted with the overbearing fierceness of our enemies, would preserve themselves and their families in peace and quietness; and so in their carelessness, they would pass their days in a security to which they have no right. They say, too, "wait a while for a better opportunity later on," not knowing that every day on which a concession is made to enemies brings trouble on many future generations.

This sentence of Chang Chih-tung's might well be taken to heart by England. Its non-observance may yet cause a terrible European war to take its origin in China.

Unless something is done at once, our country's vital strength [literally, blood and breath] will become more and more exhausted every day, while their powers of mischief [literally, teeth and claws] will increase in the same ratio. When the roots of a tree have spread deep into the ground, how can one shake it? Your servant would pray the Government and the Ministers of State to exert their energies, and at once instruct (the inhabitants of all) the villages that each village is to take care of its important posts, and at the same time to order that the batteries on the sea are to be repaired, to prevent the barbarians' ships passing. We shall then see signs of strength like teams of horses, and marks of power like hills and rivers. The foolish and idle classes will be exterminated, and the sun and moon once more shine in their glory. Magical and strange practices will be done away with, and disgrace and meanness will be swept out of heaven and earth. The mind of Heaven will thus be pacified, and the desire of men satisfied. The grievances endured by the two Empresses will be removed, and the disgrace to

two reigns will be wiped away. The country and his Majesty s Government will alike enjoy prosperity.

Your Minister has hereby committed the fault of overstepping (the duties of) his office. But even though he should be punished for so doing, he will not complain.

In view of this memorial it is not surprising that Chang Chih-tung's hatred of foreigners has long been supposed to exceed that of other Chinese. I remember once on some occasion, half in joke, saying to a Chinese gentleman *à propos* of some question pending: "I think I really must get an interview with Chang Chih-tung and see him myself. What effect do you think that would have?" I added, noting his curious change of expression. "Oh, it could not make him hate foreigners more than he does now," stammered the other, then felt he had hardly said quite the right thing, and subsided into silence.

Nevertheless, Chang Chih-tung was in 1900 one of the two Yangtse viceroys to whom, under Heaven, we Europeans in China owe our lives; he, the Viceroy of Hupeh and Hunan, joining with Liu K'un-yi, the Viceroy at Nanking, to make an agreement with Mr. (now Sir Pelham) Warren, our Consul-General, to which agreement the Manchu Viceroy of Szechuan also, after some wavering, decided to adhere; thus setting at nought the Imperial Edict to "kill us all, and if we attempted to escape to the sea to kill us straight away." Thus since 1900 we English in China feel ourselves under a great debt of gratitude to Chang Chih-tung, Liu K'un-yi, and Consul-General Pelham Warren; but even before that we all respected Chang Chih-tung, believing in his absolute honesty and disinterestedness, in his integrity of purpose and single-minded devotion to his country's welfare.

Yet there have always been strange stories about him—that he killed his wife, for instance, and never afterwards could lie down o' nights, being haunted by her ghost. The captain of a river steamer that conveyed him and his suite up the Yangtse to Tchang gave a most peculiar account of this man of small frame yet of evidently gigantic spirit:

how he never went to bed nor even lay down, and how, whenever he drowsed off for a few minutes, his attendants stood round and poked pillows under his head to support him, that the fragile frame and overworked brain might at least obtain some moments' rest. Then, waxing furious, the captain related how the gentlemen of the suite tried to take command of the steamer and hurry her on amongst the dangerous quick-sands and shallows, through which he (the captain) was painstakingly and slowly feeling his way; till at last, in indignation, regardless of all decorum, shouldering obsequious but resisting Chinamen to right and left, he rushed in upon the great little man himself; and how Chang Chih-tung, directly he understood what was the matter, gave orders, in a manner that must be obeyed, that no one should interfere with the captain in the execution of his duties—the specialist was to be left to his special subject. Then he composed himself to sleep again, after the fashion of a man accustomed to govern provinces and imagine ideal worlds, which yet he strove to realise, catching sleep the while when he could. "*In Cœlo quies,*" let us hope, is his motto, and that there may at last be peace there for many an overtaxed Chinese mandarin who, in much bewilderment, somewhat blindly strives to do his duty with an usurping Empress, a deposed Emperor, and eight nations knocking at the gates to extort from a long-suffering and too often starving peasantry compensation for their rulers' wickedness. "Beware the fury of a patient man." We may yet see worse deeds than those of 1900.

CHAPTER XI.

THINGS DOMESTIC (1877—1881).

It was doubtless due to Li's diplomatic experiences that, during the comparatively uneventful years which followed the Chefoo coronation, we find him coming forward to suggest the establishment of an Institution for the study of Foreign Affairs. Someone else suggests that there should be special examinations. The Princes took no notice of either suggestion, but in reference to the establishment of resident envoys in Japan and the countries of the West, also advocated by Li Hung-chang, Prince Li was of opinion that the measure was an expedient one. The Prince's idea, no doubt, was that the despatch of envoys, and the establishment of institutions with examinations for the study of Foreign Affairs, were two separate questions. "But to wish to carry out a measure without seeking for the material wherewith to put it into execution, or to affirm that the material exists without effectively searching for that required by such a course of procedure, although it may not render the execution of a measure impossible, yet at least makes the execution of it ineffective," said the Tsungli Yamên, or Board of Foreign Affairs.

The idea of Li Hung-chang and others was the establishment of ten district class examinations in accordance with the precedents set by the Han and Sung Dynasties. Institutions for the study of Foreign matters, and the inauguration of a separate system of examination, were measures which could co-exist with the then established examinations without mutual interference—for it was not designed to introduce

Foreign subjects into the existing examinations; and, as it was necessary to prepare men for the duties of envoys, the establishment of the above-referred-to colleges or institutions to mould their characters, and of examinations to select them, were measures which should have been undertaken. "The required talent would be collected and stored, and men fitted for posts abroad would be at hand. At the same time, the question was not one to be entered into precipitately, and the procedure required at the moment should be first deliberated upon." The Yamên, therefore, deemed it its duty to beg that the Imperial command be given to the North and South Ministers for Foreign Affairs, as well as to Shen Pao-chen and others, to introduce to the Government any officers whom they might know to possess talent fitting them for employment. Similar orders were also to be given to the Governors and Governors-General of all the provinces.

Evidently Li was taking the wise view here; and he seems to have done the same with reference to that (to Chinese) very important subject, the enshrinement of the tablets of the late Emperor and Empress in the Temple of Ancestry. Being called upon as Grand Secretary for a statement of his views, he gave it as his opinion that such systematic rules should be adopted as the times might render desirable, advocating the enlargement of the tablet-shrine. But again in this instance his advice was not followed. Then, however, a truly horrible discovery was made, that in the archive room the strips of paper used in sealing up the doors had fallen off, and both the large and small locks had been tampered with. On inspection being made, it was found that five of the archive presses had been opened, but that nothing was missing beyond 218 of the wrappers enveloping the books within. The Grand Secretaries residing in Peking, and the subordinates directly responsible, submitted themselves for the penalty they incurred through failure to guard against such an occurrence. But it seems that Li Hung-chang, not residing in Peking, was not held responsible.

In 1878 befel the Great Famine. In April of that year, we find Li, according to the curious custom, requesting that

penalties should be inflicted upon himself for his inability to combat successfully the suffering and want in the Ho-kien and other prefectures of his province.

An Edict, however, declared:—"The Governor-General has been most zealous and energetic in rendering assistance to Shansi and Honan, and in the face of the present calamity, with festering want so prominently before them, it only remains for the Sovereign and his Ministers mutually to examine into their shortcomings with reverence and fear, and to hope that by amendment of their ways and the cultivation of virtue, the present calamity may be taken away and peace given unto the people. Let Li Hung-chang, then, identify himself with the unceasing care and solicitude displayed by us, and put forth all his energies in the devising and execution of measures that shall meet actual suffering in a complete and satisfactory manner, and so show himself worthy of the confidence that has been reposed in him. And as a special act of grace, we command that the penalties which Li Hung-chang has requested may be inflicted upon himself shall be remitted."

In the Provinces of Chihli, Shansi, and Honan, and in parts of Kansuh there was no rain for two years, and the crops failed entirely. The people tried to live upon the leaves and bark of trees, they ate grass, they ate one another, but in the end it was reckoned 9,000,000 died of hunger. The Government did what it could. There is no lack of benevolent intention in China, but there are no available means of transport. Li arranged that all grain from the south should be carried by the China Merchants Company's steamers instead of by junks; but although in this way it arrived earlier, there was still great waste, and many of Li's subordinates were charged with peculation in connection with the purchase and distribution of the grain. At the same time a popular exhortation to charity was widely circulated:—

"Extraordinary is the dearth in the Northern provinces, bitter are the things before our eyes; in Shansi, in Honan, the drought is terrible and exceeding great; in Shensi and Chihli nothing has

been garnered in; year after year there has been a great drought, the various grains have not been stored away; the earth is red for three hundred miles round, the green grass cannot grow; no place is there to find things for satisfying hunger; the roots and grass and bark of trees have all been eaten clean off; hunger presses terrible to endure, it is impossible to sustain life; human flesh is much eaten, saddening to the eye and grievous to the heart; men are sold, women are for sale, but there are none to take them over; wives are deserted, children abandoned and wander about and afar in all directions; young people, wives and women, throw themselves into rivers, giving up their lives; the old in years, destitute of strength, hang themselves from beams and strangle themselves; when the bowl is brought with life-restoring food, they desire to eat, but are unable. . . . Therefore benevolent men are besought and exhorted to put forth virtuous intentions. Gradually diminish your expenses, the more then can you save from starvation; the sight of the subscription box should be like that of a man in distress; find means to bring up the orphan, and by one assistance save a double life [*i.e.* cause the child to become a man]; subscribe and assist with all your power, for to do so surpasses the building of a seven-storied pagoda; resoue sons and you will have sons; save the aged and you will add to your own age.

Do not frequent bad houses; there in a moment you expend myriads, which you should use for charity, when Heaven will grant you a good name. Do not gamble; you then lose more than you can remember, such money you should use for charity, and when you are in distress it will not be too great. Do not eat dainties; plain food is palatable enough, and great Heaven will repay the debt. Do not overdress; cloth and cotton are in common use, give value of silks and satins to charity, and Heaven will repay you ten-fold. Do not smoke opium; do not pay visits of congratulation—at marriages and birthdays friends come in crowds, and have to be entertained. You can show your virtue by doing good acts with the money saved from this which you can give in charity. Now is the time of the Dragon festival, and families and households are all enjoying themselves; spread abroad are fish, flesh, and fruits; use somewhat less and you will suffer no hardship. Take the money so saved, and send it to the chest; Heaven knows, earth sees, and the spirits will protect you. Certain will you be of honour and protection from Heaven. Do not then let slip this chance for accumulating happiness.

Then the Chinese newspapers began to tell touching stories, just as they would with us. This is from the *Shen-pao*:—

THE SLAVE WOMAN'S MITE.—A subscription box has been set up for the Honan famine, and many subscribe with pleasure their tens or hundreds of cash, whilst a few, suffering agonies, contrive to force open their purses and extract one or two dollars. On the 28th June after noon, an old slave woman was seen suddenly to give 1,000 cash [about 2s.] and hurry off, brushing away her tears. The bystanders, unable to fathom her reasons, imagined she at first threw away her money, and then, sorry she had done so, shed some tears. Some, however, who knew her explained she was a slave, and that this 1,000 cash was two months' wages which she had obtained in advance from her master to buy summer clothes. Seeing the subscription box in the street, she then learnt for the first time, from the passers-by, of the Honan famine, and regretting her means were so slight that she could not, like Too Ling, extend houses, or like Pae Fu, grant attire to the amount of myriads of taels to raise up the miserable from their distress, she had been grieved and wept. On hearing this, all applauded the woman. Now, had the rich men in the Empire the heart of this old woman, the collection of subscriptions and charities for the relief fund would not be so insuperably difficult.

This other story is, however, far more startling:—

MOTHER AND SON.—The drought in Honan drives numbers of starving people to send their young wives and daughters to the South for sale, whereby bachelors can purchase wives, or married men without offspring, concubines. Such a custom as this cannot long continue, but the crime lies with the seller, not the buyer. The following most remarkable case occurred, however, to Mr. Chia, of Nanking, on his projected marriage, the like of which has seldom been heard. Mr. Chia was of an old family, but engaged in trade. He had just been capped, being over twenty, but was not yet married, and hearing that several women had arrived for sale, he asked a friend to select one for him. The friend fell in with a woman over thirty, who was willing to marry. Chia, though the lady was of a certain age, agreed, as the price was moderate, and the engagement was made. Chia had inherited some property, but

the rebellion had spared him alone of all his family. His family house had fortunately not been entirely destroyed, and on his matrimonial matters being settled he put some apartments in a state of repair, and selected a fortunate day for consummating the ceremony. On the bride reaching the house, she began to weep uncontrollably. Mr. Chia tried to console her, but she wept more than ever; he said, "Though I have no abilities, am not a man of mark, yet I am in trade; though my house is poor, yet it is an ancestral inheritance; I have sufficient to clothe and feed us; you, madam, come of your own free will, I did not compel you, why then do you so weep?" The lady replied, "I must grieve. After being a wanderer over the face of the earth half its life, the swallow has returned to its old nest and is touched to the heart at what it sees and hears." She was in reality Mr. Chia's own mother. When sixteen she had married his father and given birth to her child. At the time of the rebellion some soldiers had carried her off, and she had been made to follow the rebels to Honan. Thus mother and son had been parted twenty years, and he no doubt had, when in the cradle, been abandoned. The lady was now really thirty-six, and having followed a man southwards, she had been selected for marriage by her own son; thus on entering the house she had been unable to restrain her grief and horror. Mr. Chia was at first incredulous, but his mother said, "I buried with my own hands, behind the house, wine, ingots of silver, and a quantity of cash; if perchance this has not been moved, it will serve as proof of what I say." Mr. Chia agreed, and it turned out true. Mother and son then lived together, and with the newly-found treasure-trove he married another person. From this remarkable story, the secret intention of Providence to bring about this reunion is manifested.

Thus moralises the Chinese newspaper, and its moralising is perhaps as good as our own. We all are apt to consider the universe as circling round our own small persons.

In 1881 Li found leisure to pen his views on the opium traffic, in reply to a communication from the Secretary of the Anti-Opium Society.

24th May, 1881.—Viceroy's Yamên, Tientsin, China,—Sir,—It gave me great pleasure to receive your letter dated 25th Feb., with its several enclosures, sent on behalf of the Anglo-Oriental Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade

Your Society has long been known to me and many of my countrymen, and I am sure that all—save victims to the opium habit and those who have not a spark of right feeling—would unite with me in expressing a sense of gratitude for the philanthropic moves and efforts of the Society in behalf of China.

To know that so many of your countrymen have united to continually protest against the evils of the opium traffic, and thus second the efforts China has long been making to free herself from this curse, is a source of great satisfaction to my Government, to whom I have communicated a copy of your letter. The sense of injury which China has so long borne with reference to opium, finds some relief in the sympathy which a society like yours existing in England bespeaks.

Opium is a subject in the discussion of which England and China can never meet on common ground. China views the whole question from a moral standpoint; England from a fiscal. England would sustain a source of revenue in India, while China contends for the lives and prosperity of her people. The ruling motive with China is to repress opium by heavy taxation everywhere, whereas with England the manifest object is to make opium cheaper, and thus increase and stimulate the demand in China.

With motives and principles so radically opposite, it is not surprising that the discussion commenced at Chefoo in 1876 has up to the present time been fruitless of good results. The whole record of this discussion shows that inducement and persuasion have been used in behalf of England to prevent any additional taxation of opium in China, and objection made to China exercising her undoubted right to regulate her own taxes—at least with regard to opium.

I may take the opportunity to assert here, once for all, that the single aim of my Government in taxing opium will be in the future, as it has always been in the past, to repress the traffic—never the desire to gain revenue from such a source. Having failed to kill a serpent, who would be so rash as to nurse it in his bosom? If it be thought that China countenances the import for the revenue it brings, it should be known that my Government will gladly cut off all such revenue in order to stop the import of opium. My Sovereign has never desired his empire to thrive upon the lives or infirmities of his subjects.

In discussing opium taxation a strange concern, approaching to

alarm, has been shown in behalf of China, lest she should sacrifice her revenue; and yet objection and protest are made against rates which could be fixed for collection at the ports and in the interior. The Indian Government is in the background at every official discussion of the opium traffic, and every proposed arrangement must be forced into a shape acceptable to that Government and harmless to its revenues. This is not as it should be. Each government should be left free to deal with opium according to its own lights. If China, out of compassion for her people, wishes to impose heavy taxes to discountenance and repress the use of opium, the Indian Government should be equally free, if it see fit, to preserve its revenue by increasing the price of its opium as the demand for it diminishes in China.

The poppy is certainly surreptitiously grown in some parts of China, notwithstanding the laws and frequent Imperial Edicts prohibiting its cultivation. Yet this unlawful cultivation no more shows that the Government approves of it than other crimes committed in the Empire by lawless subjects indicate approval by the Government of such crimes. In like manner the present import duty on opium was established, not from choice, but because China submitted to the adverse decision of arms. The war must be considered as China's standing protest against legalising such a revenue.

My Government is impressed with the necessity of making strenuous efforts to control this flood of opium before it overwhelms the whole country. The new treaty with the United States containing the prohibitory clause against opium encourages the belief that the broad principles of justice and feelings of humanity will prevail in future relations between China and Western nations. My Government will take effective measures to enforce the laws against the cultivation of the poppy in China, and otherwise check the use of opium; and I earnestly hope that your society and all right-minded men of your country will support the efforts China is now making to escape from the thraldom of opium.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

LI HUNG-CHANG.

Many people have chosen to call this letter hypocritical but it is much easier to do that than to show what the Chinese Government could do in the matter of stopping

opium smoking. This last is China's vice as drinking is that of England. Both are so injurious that it seems idle to try to establish which is most so. Under the influence of strong drink men and women are moved to commit crimes of violence as they are not under the influence of opium. On the other hand, there is no doubt that many habitual drunkards are men of great parts and of special charm of character, whom it is impossible not to love in spite of their faults. As far as I have been able to learn, this is not the case with opium smoking, which seems to deaden the moral qualities in a specially repulsive manner. Moreover, since India's revenue from the sale of opium has from natural causes fallen to less than half what it once was, one cannot help thinking that it would have been better for China, and for England's trade and intercourse generally with China, if this had been done of intention. There does not seem the least reason to doubt that Li would have done his part to contribute to this object had there ever been a way possible to him; although he is said to have grown opium on his own property and made money by it. Certainly he never fought opium with the energy of Tso Tsung-tang.

The death of the Empress in this same year had unexpected results. Li at this time, apart from some treaty questions which still required to be settled with Sir Thomas Wade, was engaged on certain commercial ventures. Among them were the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, largely established by Li's own funds; he having bought out the wharves and ships of an American Company, on the theory that if foreigners had vessels on Chinese coasts and rivers, Chinese might as well have them too. Besides this, there were the Kaiping Mines. Now Li was triumphant over the success resulting from the application of foreign machinery to these mines, and was proposing to sink shafts in adjacent iron mines, when an order was issued stopping work altogether, on the ground that foreign methods of boring go down into the vitals of the great earth-dragon—Chinese methods only tickle his hide—making him uneasy, in fact, angry. "Consequently the late Empress will not be able to rest quietly

in her grave"! In 1884, however, both Kaiping Mining Company and China Merchants' Company took a fresh start.

Two incidents of this period, sufficiently unimportant in themselves, are worth recording—simply as Chinese curiosities.

A large brass "Eight Diagrams" plate, about four feet square, with the brass chains attached to the dragon heads, griffins, etc., which adorn the side ridges of the Palace, were stolen; each of the chains weighed several hundredweight, and all were heavily plated with gold. The brass netting from under the eaves of some of the palaces and gates also disappeared. Among the thieves, some say thirteen in all, there was a colonel of about fifty years of age. When asked how they got admittance they professed to have got over the wall, which is a structure like the ordinary city walls, with a moat of about fifty feet broad outside!

In the Han-lin College, where formerly an extensive library existed for the sake of the officials, now hardly a book is to be had. The editions there were all Imperial, magnificently got up with huge margins above and below of white paper, which the Chinese so much admire in all their best books. These margins had been cut off and sold for old paper!

CHAPTER XII.

TREATIES AND WAR-CLOUDS (1879–1886).

WITH the year 1880 the (comparatively) even tenor of Li's recent career was broken by the flying visit of Gordon. Even now people do not rush out to China for a week-end, and communications were far slower then. But to explain why Gordon came, and why, having come, he went away again, it is necessary once more to touch upon politics, and to begin with those of Russia.

China had been in trouble all round. Mr. Michie describes the position well and briefly:—"In the south-west the Province of Yunnan had been severed from the Imperial rule, and in its recovery the land was almost depopulated. In the north-west there were also Mohammedan risings; and in far distant Kashgaria, separated from China by a thousand miles of desert, and militarily untenable by her, the adventurer known as Yakub-beg set up an independent government, which he maintained for some years. Anarchy on her frontier afforded to Russia the pretext of occupying Chinese territory to maintain order, but she was scrupulous in assuring the Peking Government that this step was provisional, and that she was ready to restore Kuldja as soon as the Chinese were again in a position to resume the government of the town and territory. The time came sooner than was expected. The march of Tso Tsung-tang, who halted to grow grain for the support of his army, and the disaffection in the rebel camp leading to the demise of Yakub, enabled China to reoccupy the revolted district. Russia, on being asked to redeem her pledge as to Kuldja,

made conditions which were not acceptable, and a diplomatic campaign was entered upon."

From which it may be seen that the position Russia now occupies in Manchuria is no novel one for her. She found it convenient to retire from Kashgaria; she may find it convenient to keep her word also about Manchuria. And yet the fable is handed on from father to son that "La Russie boude, mais ne recule jamais." We cannot, indeed, wonder at this, finding how convinced people are that Russia, with its weight of many millions, must flow over into and occupy the fertile plains of China. Yet Russia is the most sparsely peopled of countries—if we include Siberia, with its acres upon acres of magnificent grain-growing districts lying idle; whereas, China, the most anciently civilised of lands, is over-peopled; China alone has ever cultivated Siberia, and China still does yearly, by natural force of attraction, flow over and dig and reclaim Siberia for the Russians: who once, in alarm at the numbers of Chinese, the result of natural causes not in any way stimulated by Government, rose up and killed them in droves as sheep are led to the slaughter. That however, was in the year of many massacres, of long endurance, of heroic sieges and noble martyrdoms.

In 1879, then, a high Manchu official, the same who had been before sent to France—Chung-how—was sent to St. Petersburg, and there concluded what is commonly known as the Treaty of Livadia, in which he certainly showed that he possessed little geographical knowledge; but what did our officials show when they gave away Washington territory to the United States? He sent a copy of the treaty to Peking, set off at once for China, was received at Shanghai with all honours by the Chinese officials, and proceeded to Peking in state; but, somewhat as it befel later with Li Hung-chang on his return from his Imperial progress round the world, he was there at once handed over to the Board of Civil Office for trial on the charge of having returned to China without special permission from the Emperor. Li Hung-chang was appointed, with others, to report on the treaty. There was a party at the Court

who were strongly in favour of war at once. This party was headed by Prince Ch'un, the father of the Emperor, and Tso Tsung-tang, the hero of Kashgaria; whilst Prince Kung and Li, who better knew the condition of the Chinese army, were in favour of peace, Prince Kung being a relation of Chung-how, and therefore naturally inclined to stand by him. They could not, however, save the unlucky Ambassador from being cashiered, and handed over to the Board of Punishments for correction; and the war-party seemed likely to get the upper hand.

Troops were sent to the Kuldja frontier, and twenty Englishmen were reported to be among them. It was stated that the Russians had found Kuldja, during the years in which they occupied it, the richest and most promising of all their conquests and annexations in Central Asia, the barrenness of the greater part of which brought the fertility and resources of Kuldja more prominently before their eyes. Its population at that time was estimated at from 100,000 to 130,000 souls, mostly Tarantchis and Kirghiz; but there were also large communities of other Central Asian tribes within its borders, together with a few Russian and Chinese settlers. The Russians had been willing to give up a part of it, on condition of retaining in their own hands command of the military passes, and receiving general permission for Russian merchants to trade in any part of China, as well as a trifle of 5,000,000 roubles by way of compensation. Then it was that the incorruptible Chang Chih-tung made his first great impression upon China by a memorial especially worth perusing carefully at the present time. It not only speaks volumes for his judgment, but is pregnant with suggestions that might be of use now. Unfortunately, it is too long to quote, except in the Appendix.*

The arguments of this memorial contain something in the nature of a side thrust against Li. "The enormous expenditure of millions of taels spent year after year in the manufacture of war material has been incurred for just such a crisis as to-day's. If, after all that, we cannot fight one battle even, of what use are the servants in whom your Majesty trusts?"

* See Appendix A.

Indeed, the attack was now turned from the already fallen Chung-how and directed against Li; Li who had just got out a fleet of gunboats from England; Li, who as the head of the army, Viceroy of Chihli, and Grand Secretary, was also confidential adviser of the two Empresses, the Regents.

Through Sir Robert Hart a telegram had been despatched to Li's old friend and subordinate General Gordon. Gordon was in India at this juncture, having gone out with Lord Ripon. Great things had been expected of him there; a cloud of romance had surrounded his campaign in China, carried on with a walking-stick as sole means of self-defence, and people had not realised how impulsive and arbitrary he was. Hardly had he arrived in India before an Indian prince told Gordon the history of his wrongs, and Gordon at once announced to the Viceroy that he ought to be pardoned and reinstated. Although it seems that Gordon was quite right in his conclusion, it is not unnatural that the Viceroy should have said something tantamount to "Wait a bit while we examine into the circumstances of the case." "If you don't release him at once I leave you," is said to have been Gordon's reply. Resign he did next day; intending to proceed to Zanzibar and investigate the condition of things in Africa; but then came the unconditional invitation from the Chinese Government in the form of a telegram from Sir Robert Hart. This Gordon accepted at once, without knowing what he was wanted for, or on what terms, and sailed for China. If—if—if—how often one speculates on this in life! If Gordon had but thrown all his strategic ability, amounting to genius, and the whole force of his magnetic personality, together with his burning Christian faith, on to the side of the Taipings, who wished to be Christians, but did not know how, then—then—! But that opportunity was gone for ever. And it is not impossible that Gordon had, by this time, realised what had been missed, and for ever!

On his arrival at Hongkong he talked with the various officers there; all agreeing that for China to fight Russia then would be madness, Gordon himself being, as usual,

specially outspoken in his views. Accounts differ as to whether it was at Shanghai or Chefoo that Gordon then got a telegram telling him that if such were his views, he had better not proceed, being decidedly not wanted if in favour of peace. One account says the telegram was from Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister, as a warning; others, that it was an intimation conveyed through Sir Robert Hart from the Chinese Government. Perhaps both telegraphed. In any case, as might be imagined by anyone who knew Gordon, he was very angry, and went straight on to Tientsin.

Whereupon there occurred an incident which sounds so romantic and improbable that I hesitate to record it; yet, since it was told to me by one of the best European authorities on Chinese political affairs, with all their many improbabilities and inconsistencies, who declares that it was true, I here give it. As Gordon's boat was making its way up the Peiho, in the evening, a big man came on board in the dark, and sat down and talked—talked well, too. Gordon was drawn on into expressing his opinions freely; but his man servant, who was interpreter, could not make out the stranger's dialect, and so Gordon, waxing impatient, called on another man to serve as interpreter. The other began, looked at the big man, looked again, then knocked his forehead on the ground and solemnly kotowed. It was Li himself, come off alone in the dark to learn what Gordon really meant to do. And together the two men talked long into the night.

Next day Li officially received Gordon as if for the first time; but they already knew each other's views; and Gordon went on at once to Peking, though Li begged him not to do so. There he saw Prince Kung, poured out all his views to him, and saw that Prince Kung was not absolutely convinced, but after the official fashion inclined to delay, and let things ripen a little. "Oh, you had better make haste," said Gordon. "I leave for Tientsin to-morrow morning." He did so, and started for England by the next steamer—very likely the wisest thing he could have done—leaving a strange feeling of unrest behind him. He never saw Sir Robert Hart, in

accordance with whose telegram he had come to China he did not even call upon the British Minister; but from some port on the voyage sent back this singular and most characteristic letter, which again it would be well to reflect upon, not just to skim through. For by its light not only might China have escaped her overwhelming defeat at the hands of Japan in 1894, but we also in England in 1902 might not have been lamenting how—

"The flowers o' the forest are a' wede awa'"—

had we realised what the Boers by the quick moving of their troops with little baggage could do against even the best armed regulars "if the country is at all difficult"; for as the Chinese proverb says: "The mighty dragon himself is no match for the local snake." This was Gordon's advice to the Chinese in 1880:—

China possesses a long-used military organisation, a regular military discipline. Leave it intact. It is suited to her people.

China's power is in her numbers, in the quick moving of her troops, in the little baggage they require, in their few wants. It is known that men armed with sword and spear can overcome the best regular troops, though armed with the best breechloading rifles and well instructed in every way, if the country is at all difficult, and if the men with the spears and swords outnumber their foe ten to one. If this is the case, when men are armed with spears and swords, it will be much truer when the same are armed with ordinary breechloaders.

China should never engage in pitched battles. Her strength is in quick movements, in cutting off the trains of baggage, and in night attacks, not pushed home; in a continuous worrying of her enemies.

. . . . . .

When the enemy comes up and breaks the wall of a city the Chinese soldiers ought not to stay and fight the enemy, but to go out and attack the trains of baggage in the rear and worry him on the roads he came by. By keeping the Chinese troops lightly loaded with baggage, with no guns, they can move two to every one li the enemy marches. To-day the Chinese will be before him; to-morrow they will be behind him; the next day they will be on

his left hand, and so on, till the enemy gets tired and cross with such long walks, and his soldiers quarrel with their officers and get sick.

. . . . . .

Remember, with this programme, China wants no big officer from foreign Powers; I say big officer, because I am a big officer in China. If I stayed in China it would be bad for China, because it would vex the American, French, and German Governments, who would want to send their officers. Besides, I am not wanted. China can do what I recommend herself. If she cannot, I could do no good. (Signed)

Canton, 7th July, 1880. C. G. Gordon.

P.S.—As long as Peking is the centre of the Government of China, China can never afford to go to war with any first-class Power. It is too near the sea. The Emperor (Queen Bee) must be in the centre of the hive.

No ironclads or iron gunboats can help China till she has a place to keep them in. But China can have no place (asylum) to keep them till she has an army.

China cannot have an army when generals keep 2,000 men and draw pay for 5,000. Those generals ought to have their heads cut off.

It was disinterested, high-spirited advice, but one can hardly say that it was couched in the terms most likely to conduce to its being acted upon.

The sentence of decapitation against Chung-how was remitted, but he was still kept in prison for awhile, then released. The Marquis Tsêng, afterwards Chinese Minister in London, and son of Li's great patron Tsêng Kwo-fan, was called upon to act with due care and attention, and eventually concluded what is known as the Treaty of St. Petersburg, by which "the Tekkes Valley and the passes through the Tien Shan into Kashgaria were to remain in Chinese hands, but the indemnity, which had been fixed by Chung-how at 5,000,000 metal roubles, was increased by Tsêng to 9,000,000."

Li, although eagerly denounced, continued to hold all his high posts.

The years '82, '83, '84, and '85 witnessed the great Korean conspiracy and two ill-advised steps on the part of the British Government; but as these had but little effect upon Li's life they must be but briefly touched upon.

In 1882 the father of the King of Korea, who had ceased to be Regent on his son's coming of age, tried to depose him. In the contest the Japanese Legation was attacked and a good many Japanese killed. Li Hung-chang, having learnt from the Formosa experience that it was better to be beforehand with the Japanese in establishing order, despatched an envoy with a squadron, and carried off the King's usurping father to China as a State prisoner Intrigues continued; two Ministers were assassinated in 1884, partly, perhaps, because the Koreans were attempting then to free themselves from Chinese supremacy by aid of the Japanese. The Japanese tabulated the casualties "Seven officials killed by progressives, 7 progressives killed by Korean troops, 38 Korean soldiers killed by Japanese troops, 95 rioters killed by Japanese, 67 progressives imprisoned, 11 beheaded with shocking barbarities at execution." Kim Ok Kum took refuge in Japan, where he used to be pointed out to globe trotters as the murderer, who had killed as many people as any man they were likely to see; a description which always struck me as most unfair considering his had been political murders. However, he had been confidential adviser to the Crown, and the King of Korea stood in terror of his life whilst Kim lived. Finally by means of a plot long enough for a three-volume novel at least, he was lured to Shanghai by Koreans and there murdered in his turn by a Korean patriot. The King of Korea, "in a frenzy of delight," gave a banquet to which he invited all the foreign ministers. The Japanese were not pleased and Count Inouye was sent to Korea to investigate the relative positions of China and Japan with regard to Korea. An embassy was sent to Peking under Count Ito, but could not succeed in settling anything with the Tsungli Yamên; so even the Japanese were reduced to

treating with Li Hung-chang at Tientsin. Then, after several weeks of negotiation, Count Ito was successful in concluding a treaty by which China and Japan were put on a footing of equality in Korea; but China retained the ceremonial form of suzerainty till nine years later, when Count Ito and Li Hung-chang had again to conclude a treaty.

From spite of all Li Hung-chang's astuteness, it is worth noting that he could not hold his own against Count Ito even in 1885.

Next, Great Britain occupied Port Hamilton. Lord Granville said it was necessary to do so in order to anticipate the "probable occupation of the island by another Power." China and Japan both objected, and the Russian Minister said Russia would have to compensate herself by seizing some other port. Eighteen months after taking it Great Britain came to the conclusion that it was not worth having. Korea proposed to open as Treaty Ports both Port Hamilton and Port Lazareff, which Russia had wished for, but this was not arranged.

The whole of this business can now be only considered as one of England's many mistakes in the Far East. The next was that of preparing to send the Macaulay Mission to Tibet with some 300 men, and then, after sending a special envoy, Chandra Das, to Peking to get the proper passport, and after a delegate had also been sent there from the Grand Lama, despatching orders to the Indian Government to stop the Mission.

From all this confused tangle of questions, in which it must have seemed really impossible to know what the English would in the end do, Li Hung-chang had somehow or other to manage to obtain what was best for China. Then also there were troubles in Peking between Prince Kung and his faction and the Empress Regent and her following. Tze An, the real Empress Regent, had departed this life in one way or other in 1881. For twenty-five years Prince Kung had held the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs and head of the Tsungli Yamên; now the Empress, Tze-Hsi, dis-

missed him and his set, and tried to bring forward her sister's husband, Prince Ch'un. And, as Ch'un was also father of the young Emperor, for foreign affairs he had to be largely represented by Li and Prince Ching, who now replaced Prince Kung as President of the Tsungli Yamên, and afterwards became so well known to the world by the messages during the Peking siege "from Prince Ching and others."

Li had visited Port Arthur before retiring for his mother's funeral, and had been greatly delighted with the fortress, as also with the ships. Now, on the way back to Tientsin, he inspected various arsenals and forts, and in September, 1884, he was formally reinstated in his offices of Viceroy, Superintendent of Foreign Trade, and Grand Secretary; though against his will, as it would seem from his repeated memorials begging to be left in retirement. Some Europeans had an interview with Li about this time. During the conversation the door opened, and the Viceroy's grandson, a child of three years old, ran in and clambered upon his lap. "There," said one of the gentlemen present, smilingly, "sits the future Foreign Minister of China." "My child," said Li, with the somewhat grim humour which characterised him, "when you grow up, have nothing to do with foreign affairs, then you won't be so much abused as your grandfather was before you."

Li was very much depressed on his return by a telegram handed to him about the doings of the Black Flags in Tonquin, accompanied by a request from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs that he or Chang would attend to the matter. The Black Flags seem to have occupied precisely the same position that the Boxers (so-called) afterwards stepped into. Outlawed by the Chinese, called pirates by the French, the Annamese Government had invited their assistance; and the Chinese Government officially encouraged them, for the French were attacking China's tributaries one after the other—Cochin China, Annam, and then Tongking. They had destroyed the seal granted to the Annamese sovereign by the Emperor, and the Marquis Tsêng in Paris and Li Hung-chang in China were both trying in vain to arrest the French. The Chinese Envoy had declared that any attack upon Sontay

or Bacninh would mean war; but the French seized both in the spring of 1884, and nothing came of it. Admiral Jaureguibèry wrote: "The conquest of Tongking had been decided upon in principle when at home the French were declaring they had no policy of aggression." We Europeans may complain of diplomatic insincerity on the part of the Chinese, but it seems sometimes to be rather a case of pot and kettle.

Mr. Detring, a German, whom we met before as Commissioner of Customs at Tientsin, now on his way to take up a similar post at Canton, accepted a passage thither in a French man-of-war; the consequence of this was that he advised that its captain, Fournier, should be sent to treat with Li Hung-chang; for he found the rich city of Canton perfectly unprepared to defend itself against a French attack, the provincial authorities being fully aware of the fact, but not daring to avow it to the Imperial Government.

Mr. Detring, in the first instance, himself returned to Tientsin to talk over matters with Li. It will be observed that in each dealing with a foreign nation Sir Robert Hart, the head of the Customs, or Mr. Detring, one of his subordinates, acts as intermediary; and yet people expect the Chinese to accept the Customs—originally called Maritime, but now installed all about in the interior of China—as having nothing to do with foreign politics, and in no wise threatening the subjugation of the country.

Captain Fournier was soon summoned from Chefoo—where he was sent to wait till Mr. Detring had prepared the way—to Tientsin, where, by telegram from France, he was at once raised to the rank of a plenipotentiary, although there was already a French Minister at Peking. He and Li Hung-chang seem to have got on capitally, and indeed signed a convention on May 11th, which they celebrated by a grand dinner, given by Li to the gallant naval officer and to all who had taken part in the negotiations.

It was but a few months since the Empress Dowager had presented Li with a few ounces of tobacco, a girdle, and some pieces of embroidery; but before the convention was signed there came a private communication in which she is re-

ported to have said: "The Ministers of the Grand Council stand in the position of eyes and ears to the Throne, and the high provincial officers are reckoned upon to assist them. But you," says her Majesty, addressing Li, "confine your attention simply to what is before you at the moment, and appear to exercise not the slightest foresight with regard to the future;" and further accuses him of cowardice, negligence, and bad management. The Viceroy is reported to have been much disturbed by the receipt of this dispatch. Over forty-five Censors and other members of the Hanlin Yuen impeached the Viceroy Li on seeing the translation of the Franco-Chinese convention, written in French. No wonder Li was in such a low state of mind before signing it that Chinese newspapers described him as having "locked himself up in a room, where he spent his time heaving profound sighs and gazing through the window at the moon;" although this sounds particularly unlike the great Li, and hardly consistent with another account, which records that "the various official documents received every day by Viceroy Li, when piled up, are over a foot in thickness. They are read as soon as they arrive, and no sooner read than answered. Before noon is reached, the amanuenses and scribes show signs of being greatly fatigued. Moreover, Li has to receive in audience his subordinates, and foreign Ministers on international affairs, so that there is scarcely a moment's rest to be obtained from dawn to sunset."

Now, however, ensued a far worse state of things than before. According to Mr. Michie, whilst Li was endeavouring to obtain an indefinite delay in retiring the Chinese troops, his interpreter summed it up to Fournier in two words "Avancez donc." According to Captain Fournier, a date was definitely fixed for the Chinese to retire and the French to advance, and a pen was subsequently drawn through the date. Li's two secretaries positively deny that they made the erasures in the Fournier Memorandum afterwards, and declare that they saw Captain Fournier make them with his own hand. If the French military commander had advanced with sufficient force all this would not

so much have mattered; but as it was, when he called upon the Chinese commander to evacuate his post, the latter said he had received no instructions to do so, and on the French still persisting in advancing, they were driven back with considerable loss. Mr. Michie's idea seems to be that Li on purpose left the date vague, because he shrank from asking the Central Government to order the troops to withdraw, and trusted the French would advance in sufficient numbers to settle the matter for themselves. This repulse of the French terminated the convention, and the Franco-Chinese war may be said to have begun in August, 1884, continuing till the following April. The French destroyed the Chinese ships belonging to the Foochow squadron, also the Arsenal, which, as Li Hung-chang bitterly complained, had been erected by "French genius." They were not successful in Formosa, and the French Government refused their Admiral leave to "attack Port Arthur" on the non-military ground of wishing to save the prestige of "notre ami Li Hung-chang."

In the end Sir Robert Hart was the intermediary in bringing about peace through his London agent, who was sent to Paris to open negotiations with the French Minister—nominally about a small Chinese lighthouse tender captured by the French, and needed by the foreign Customs in China. M. Ferry had the treaty all ready, when the news came of a French defeat. General Négrier had been wounded, and his troops had retreated in hot haste before imaginary pursuers. M. Ferry, feeling sure the Chinese after their victory would never keep to this treaty, was then afraid to say anything about it, although it might have saved him; and in the storm of indignation roused by hearing of the French defeat, he had to resign. So M. Ferry's successor thus got the honour of the treaty, which seems to have been almost identical with that concluded between Li and Fournier. There had been a year's fighting in the interval; China had spent 100,000,000 taels, and France much the same. The Dowager Empress, unmoved by the successes of the Chinese troops, seems to have been urgent for peace. There was still a doubtful clause for casuists to split hairs about; and to get over that China agreed to

give "a French syndicate the contract for excavating the basin and dock at Port Arthur and certain orders for material, among which was a famous military balloon, wonderfully symbolic of the whole proceeding," as says Mr. Michie. Thus Li's good sense in making the Li-Fournier convention seems to have been completely vindicated. At the same time there was a large party at the Court furious with him for never having the army in a condition to fight anywhere. And this still remains the heaviest indictment against him.

This concession to the French started Li upon that prolonged and continuous intercourse with promoters and syndicates, from which it would require a man of stronger moral fibre than he was to emerge unspotted.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VICEROY'S MOTHER (1882–1883).

HITHERTO we have watched Li's career entirely in his public capacity; but the death of his mother in 1882 not only reminds us that there was another side to his life, but illustrates the fact in rather a striking manner.

To a Chinese his mother is probably always the dearest woman in the world. And Li's mother was by universal consent a very remarkable woman. There is a curious tale told of her by Chinese, that her feet were not properly bound, and that once when she was getting into her sedan chair her illustrious son begged her to cover them more with her skirts, that everyone might not see them; on which she rebuked him, and said she would stretch them right out for everyone to see, for she was not ashamed of them, if he was. It is a very popular tale, but when I referred to it to Li himself, he said his mother only let out her feet a little when she was quite old.

She had been now for some years past living with her elder son, Li Han-chang, Viceroy of Hupeh and Hunan, at Wuchang, opposite to Hankow, on the river Yangtse. Li Han-chang had done everything he could for his mother, and in 1882 the best Chinese doctors were called in, with the hope of prolonging her life. So little hope was entertained, however, that he devolved upon another official the annual grand inspection of the troops, and one night all the officials of the city were assembled at the Viceroy's Yamên to offer their condolence on the momentarily expected decease of his mother, who was 83. Li Hung-chang, who had seen (Dr.) Mrs.

King's success with his wife, invited her to attend his mother at Wuchang. He also memorialised the Throne, applying for leave of absence, saying that "his heart burned with anxiety, and his sleep and his food were worthless to him. Since the day in the spring of 1870, when he left with his forces for Shên-si, and bade her farewell, thirteen years ago, he had never seen his mother's face. A man has a long lifetime, it is said, to spend in his country's service, and but a short term of years in which he can serve his parents; and now that the illness from which his mother has long been suffering still continues unabated, the memorialist all night long tosses about in his trouble, and not for a single moment is his mind at rest," etc. etc.

The march of progress has carried us far away from the period when a statesman even in unemotional England might have written somewhat after this fashion in view of an aged mother's death. But as one reads the fond words the idea occurs that the march of progress does not always lead onward and upward! Li finishes by saying "he presents this memorial with inexpressible fear and distress of mind." He was granted a month's leave of absence, and the Empress sent eight ounces of ginseng (Aralia quinquefolia), which the Chinese believe above everything possesses the power of rejuvenating the old. But it was all too late, and the news of his mother's death reached Tientsin before Li could even finish his preparations for departure. So the aged mother of two Viceroys was measured for her wadded clothes—they think the dead go to the coldest of regions—footstove and all were prepared, and her most celebrated son, the great Li, was still far away. According to Chinese usage he ought now to retire and mourn for twenty-seven months; and many of his rivals, and those who desired to rise into the posts that would be left vacant by his absence, were full of expectancy; but they were disappointed.

For those who, like myself, find pleasure in the quaint old-world flavour of the Chinese phrases, I here append a few extracts from Li's memorials in this connection:—

In one he says:—

The Memorialist was vouchsafed a Decree (Jan. 29th, 1883) in which he reverently recognised the completeness of his Majesty's instruction and admonition and the perfection of his praise and pity in that, amid his anxious care for the weighty questions of the defence of the capital, he could yet find room to compassionate the private feelings of his servant. The Memorialist, conscious of his own unworthiness of the affectionate bounty, with which he has so often been blessed, humbly received his will with a tearful gratitude too great for words, and has since the beginning of spring quietly awaited his Majesty's commandment. He should not dare to importune his Majesty with the repetition of his grief and anxiety; but time glides by, the ice has melted, and the day for opening the temporary mound is, he reckons, little more than a month distant. The way from Tientsin to Anhui is long, and, even with the aid of a steamship, more than ten days are needed to reach his home. Moreover, if all that is required for the funeral be not fully prepared beforehand and carefully taken account of, the worship will be imperfect and the rites hurriedly performed—a source of lifelong regret to the Memorialist. The Record of Rites says: "A dutiful son takes anxious thought when about to worship; not one point may he leave unprovided for." Since in sacrifice deliberate provision is so needful, how, then, could the thought of undue haste or negligence in laying a parent's body in the tomb be borne! Thus for more than a month his eager gaze has in thought been fixed on the yew-trees, his spirit has flown to his home, and from morn till eve he has with outstretched neck looked for the coming of his Majesty's gracious mandate. Official despatches, too, have been numerous, so that, harassed by public and private anxiety, his mind is confused as by a sense of loss. Now that, by the majesty and fortune of his sacred Lord, the coasts are at peace and international affairs are not very pressing, he ventures to repeat his former requests and to pray for a few months' leave. He requests that Chang Shu-sheng, whose leave will shortly expire, may be ordered to proceed to Tientsin at once and act as Superintendent of Trade as well as Viceroy of Chihli.

In another he writes:—

As I gaze south towards my native land, my heart is troubled. With tears I bethink me I have never found opportunity to revisit my home and minister to my mother. I have failed in my filial office,

and now, the utmost I can do is only to lay her in the tomb. On this one occasion to consign her body to the earth, and to offer sacrifice to the dead, is all but to fulfil the outward show of duty. In the grave there is no meeting, and though I long to spend my power in requiting her affection by loving tendance, never shall I obtain my desire.

Finally, comes his expression of gratitude :—

The Memorialist was moved to tears of gratitude by the Decree of March 8th, granting him two months' leave. Since he was summoned northwards last autumn and sacrificed the rules of propriety to the public weal, his heart has been disquieted within him, as if oppressed with heavy guilt. He has, for the few months he has been at Tientsin, made such dispositions as were required from time to time, but has not been able to enter on any wide measures. Of late he has beset his Majesty's ear with urgent pleadings, the thought of his mother's body still unburied rendering him unconscious of the burdensome iteration of his cry. It is but natural for a man in pain to call on his father, in distress and longing to cry to Heaven. Relying on the loving affection of a Sovereign Father, he simply prayed that his yearning might be speedily satisfied, and had no care for the limits of respectful speech. The leave now graciously granted him will not only enable his Majesty's servant to fulfil to the uttermost his desire to show careful attention in the performance of the funeral rites of his parent, but will relieve in some degree the secret sorrow of an orphan for the breach of the rules of propriety. His gratitude for his Majesty's pity and aid will last for ever and ever.

By May 17 Li had applied for the third time, begging to be permitted to retire for the full period of mourning, but the Emperor declined to extend the leave of one hundred days originally granted. On the expiry of that term Li must return to his post as Acting Viceroy and eventually be restored to the full appointment, which for the time devolved upon his substitute Chang.

There is a glowing account of Li's departure by a Tientsin correspondent of the Shanghai paper :—

On the Bund, in front of the steamer, was erected an imposing structure of bamboos covered with matting, combining temple,

reception and refreshment rooms; the last-named kept well supplied by the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, whose entire premises were, in fact, open house for those who were to do honour to the departing Viceroy. Throughout the day the Bund in front of the steamer presented a busy panorama of mandarins with their followers; and at five o'clock in the afternoon the ship was crowded by the native gentry of Tientsin, waiting to do homage to the great man. Then the Viceregal launch came alongside; Li was received at the gangway by the captain, and passed aboard, where a small army of mandarins did obeisance to him, and conducted him to his quarters. Here he was called upon by the new Viceroy, Chang, Sir Thomas Wade, and the various Consuls; after whom, by native officials almost without number; whilst the Viceroy's band played lively marches.

At daylight the next morning the *Pautah* started down river, one Chinese gunboat preceding, and another following her. The banks of the river were lined with troops, who presented a most imposing spectacle with their gaudy banners advanced and grouped in front. In the Chinese Army it often seems as if there were a banner to each man. Repeated volleys from the regiments, salutes from the field batteries, and the music of the regimental bands, made the morning air heavy with smoke and sound. As the steamer came abreast of each regiment, at a given order down they went upon their knees, and remained so until she had passed by.

This is what so impressed foreign correspondents, when the Court returned to Peking in 1902, but it is the usage at all viceregal reviews. The scenic effect is very fine, and I have always thought more theatrical than anything I have ever seen upon the London stage, where the attention seems generally diverted and frittered among details instead of all leading up to one grand culminating effect.

The forts paraded their garrisons, and salutes were fired from each as she passed. At the new city there were 10,000 troops in one unbroken line, making a most brilliant display. On the arrival of the *Pautah* at Taku, the Chinese fleet manned yards, and each saluted the fleet of H.E. as he passed by; and as the steamer came to anchor between the forts at the mouth of the river, the boom of the salutes was deafening. Two hours were given to leave-taking (for

several hundred officials had accompanied Li thus far), and then the steamer started on her voyage amidst another salvo of big and little guns that made the air tremble. Although His Excellency had throughout plainly shown a disposition to avoid demonstrations, still he could not but feel gratified by such tokens of respect and honour, given so enthusiastically.

It is pleasant to pause over this picture of Li, in his very day of prosperity, going forth among all this magnificence, to pay his last respects at the funeral of the mother who had watched over his infant years, and whose face he had not been permitted to see for thirteen years past, although residing in the same country. But China is so vast, and means of travel so slow. To reach my own home, in the West of China, from Shanghai, takes longer than to get to Shanghai from London! The Tientsin paper adds:—

The regrets of parting are sincere, because, while Li's first thought is always for the Empire, he has a strong element of fair dealing in his mental composition, and a vastly better comprehension of external forces than is possessed by any other of the highest officials.

There is a curious story about the Viceroy's departure, which illustrates not only the intriguing constantly going on, but also Li's own methods.

No sooner was the acting Viceroy, Chang, installed in his new office, than he denounced the whole body of the provincial officers. Possibly he wanted to lose no time in getting round him his own friends, knowing that Li's men would always look up to him, not to Chang, as their lord. Anyway the memorial denouncing them is said to have been received by some of the grandees at the conclusion of a sumptuous dinner that they had been enjoying in company.

In this document the late Viceroy of Chihli, as is related, was solemnly impeached, accused of misgovernment, corruption, misappropriation of State funds, and other irregular practices. These accusations were at once sent to Li by a trusty friend, and two counter-strokes were given, one after another without loss of time.

The Viceroy Chang came on board to take leave of the departing Minister, and as he returned on shore Li handed him, with some mocking expressions, a paper he said he had just received from Peking which nearly concerned His Excellency. The other, ignorant of the discovery of his plot, took it with a smile, little thinking that it was a copy of his own denunciation of Li himself.

The story is "*ben trovato*" anyhow. For this is just the sort of thing Li would have done.

And then he steamed away with all the army on its bended knees, abasing its banners in the dust before him. Then the two Viceroys, Li Han-chang and Li Hung-chang with their two brothers, twenty sons, and eight grandsons, lamented at the old lady's funeral whilst "the memorial tablet of the deceased was placed among the ancestral memorials of the Li family, in the presence of three hundred mandarins, who one and all kotowed before the tablet in token of their respect for the mother of the great Viceroys." She, we must remember, was a real Li, born so; Li Hung-chang and the others were not really Lis, their grandfather being a Hsü, adopted into the Li family. Adoption is very frequent in China. But this explains how it was that Li's parents were not debarred from marrying. Even so, marriage between persons bearing the same surname is so unusual that one suspects some exceptional explanation in this case, though other members of the family can suggest none.

Li's mother was evidently a woman of great influence. And sometimes I have fancied that there was a change in Li after her death in 1882; he was then himself sixty, at which age, according to Chinese usage, a man is entitled to retire from public life. He had his wife, however, for ten years longer, and she, too, by all accounts, was a woman of intelligence and not to be set at naught. When the feet of the women of China are not mutilated and they are no longer thus handicapped in the battle of life, we may expect to see an immense change in the nation if it be not too late—if it be only not too late! Towards the end of his career Li was

without the loving help of woman, and this may possibly account for the increasing deadliness of soul that is perceptible in his later years.

> " They pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,
> Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,
> Hugging their bodies round them like thin shrouds
> Wherein their souls were buried long ago."

CHAPTER XIV.

MINOR AFFAIRS (1884—1887).

It was in 1884 that Li was ordered to take up the late Tso Tsung-tang's place of "Court-walking," and in 1885 he was ordered—together with Prince Ch'un, the Emperor's father and the Councillor of Foreign Affairs—specially to consider the pressing problem how to protect China against sea attack. Thus Li was styled Associate President of the Board of Admiralty. They decided that there must be a disciplined naval force, of which Prince Ch'un was to be the head, Yih-kwong and Li were to make arrangements for the management, and Li, as usual, was to raise the funds. Li had up till lately held rather peculiar ideas about naval matters, as may be seen by his claiming, in 1882, rewards and honours for certain officers who had brought some gunboats out from England without damage. "Hitherto," he said, "it has been the custom to pay a very heavy sum for insurance along the entire route, and in the present instance Sir Robert Hart had made a special request that the insurances should be effected in some foreign office. He, however, with a view to saving further useless and unprofitable expenses, gave private and particular instructions not to insure the vessels, but to exercise more than ordinary caution and care. Foreigners," he added, "all considered this policy most reckless. In spite of it all, the vessels were brought out safely, unprotected by insurance, and in so doing the officers in charge accomplished a feat of infinitely greater difficulty than that of a diplomatist, who merely labours with pen and tongue." He had, however, already started a Naval School, and since then called for a competitive examination of

candidates; and, no doubt, his steamship company was educating him.

At any rate Li, in order to interest Prince Ch'un in his scheme of naval defence, persuaded him to make the celebrated trip to Port Arthur, where they were met by a British admiral with a guard of honour. This naturally gave Prince Ch'un at first a great shock, as it appeared to him as if he had been trapped into the power of a foreign force; but with his Court training he showed but little of his feelings, and seems to have impressed the foreigners he had already met at Tientsin very favourably. Pleasant little anecdotes are related of him. The Prince was walking round the steamer, looking into everything with a natural curiosity, when he came to the cabin of the second engineer, the door of which was open. Taking up a fan that was lying near the door, he fanned himself with it, then took it back with him to his state-room, and wrote an autograph motto on it in Mongolian characters, Li Hung-chang putting this into Chinese on the other side. The Prince then sent it back to the engineer by one of his interpreters, who said that to a Chinese official the fan would be worth several thousand taels, for Chinese set a great value on autographs of members of the Imperial family. He also sent for cakes and wine on another occasion and offered them to the officers, who had been playing and singing to him. It is well known that on his return he wrote a little volume of poems about his journey, which so fired the Dowager Empress with emulation that she, too, wanted to make a voyage; and the preparations for this were being pressed forward when the Boxer outbreak put an end to all projects of travel, until there came the sudden flight from Peking.

During these years Li had a great deal of trouble with his steamer company. Two officials had to be reported to the Throne as defaulters, one to the amount of 62,000 taels, and the other of 30,000 taels. A subsequent manager showed a deficit of 200,000 taels, yet the number of steamers was always being added to. When Li invited people to take shares in the railway between the Kaiping mines and Tientsin, no one would

have anything to do with the scheme since it was under official control. But for Li's energy in preventing the steamers of the Governor of Formosa from trading on the Yangtse, and so successfully securing the monopoly of Government freight northwards for his company, the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company would probably have done much worse. We have seen before how Li supported the monopoly of his Shanghai cotton factory, and even when he visited the Tientsin Printing Company's offices, he seems to have done so as a business man, giving the editors valuable advice, and at once pointing out some of the defects. Besides all this, he had an exceedingly complex prospectus to bring out for gold mining in Manchuria. Surely even the men who think in millions would be puzzled to turn their attention to so many subjects as a poor Chinese Viceroy has to deal with in these complicated latter days.

There was also the Telegraph Convention to settle. Telegrams can be sent for less than sixpence a word from Petersburg to Vladivostock. If these telegrams could but be sent on across the boundary into China it would be an immense convenience, not only to business men, but to all residents in the Far East. But it was decided in the interests of the Eastern Extension and Great Northern Companies not to allow this, and to keep up the rates at 5s. 6d. a word to Europe, the Chinese Telegraph Administration receiving 100,000 taels a year for doing this. Thus the Chinese Government made itself a partner with two private companies in the exploitation of the country for the sake of a hundred thousand taels a year. Curiously enough, not only did the British Minister agree to this, but I recollect the representative of one of the largest business-houses in the East arguing that it was desirable that the price of telegraphs should be kept up, as otherwise so many Europeans with little capital might be tempted into business in China.

It was soon after a visit to Peking in 1885, that Li entered on the question of the Northern Cathedral. The Dowager Empress had long wished to obtain possession of this, on the ground that its lofty tower overlooked the

palace grounds, and although the Fathers had promised never to ascend their tower without permission, yet the arrangement hardly seemed a satisfactory one. We cannot imagine even an English sovereign, who does not specially court retirement, liking a large mosque built beside his palace grounds with a minaret commanding a full view of them. Li sent an Englishman, "Mysterious Dunn," as he was then called, to Rome to approach the Pope, both about the giving up of the cathedral and the expediency of appointing a delegate to China to represent all Roman Catholic missions—thus removing them from the Protectorate of France, who too often uses what are called missionary troubles for her own political purposes. Li Hung-chang himself had so little realised the importance of this last matter, that when Mr. Dunn's telegrams began to treat of it, he felt irritated, and could not at first think what they were about.

An exchange of sites was agreed upon without difficulty. This was followed up by a list of rewards for all concerned—a button of the third rank for Père Favier, Mr. Dunn to receive 2,000 taels with a "Precious Star" of the third class, (the money to be provided by Li Hung-chang), Mr. Detring a button of the second rank; Mr. Michie to be eventually rewarded also, as soon as Li Hung-chang has suggested some appropriate form of recompense!

But the other part of the matter that Mr. Dunn had undertaken was far more difficult. The Empress Dowager is said to have grasped the importance of having the Roman Catholic Church in China represented by the delegate of a Power which has no armies or fleets wherewith to threaten or attack; and when Mgr. Agliardi's coming was announced to depend on his getting a formal Imperial invitation, she sent an urgent message to the Yamên, "Get that man here; lose no time"; but the French Government threatening in that case to withdraw the subvention to the Church in France, and sequestrate its ministers, the Pope "deplored his impotence to respond to the invitation of China under such a truculent menace to his children in France." In the Chinese Press we find the natural comment: "It is rather suspicious that

the French Government, the greatest enemy of Christianity, which is constantly oppressing the priests and confiscating their property in France, should be so intensely desirous of protecting Christians in China, where this protection is not required," and again, "During the last hundred years Russia has several times made war on Turkey, always on the pretext of protecting Christians, and it is this which is fast breaking up the Turkish Empire. It is interesting to observe that Russia and France follow the same policy in this matter." It is evident, however, that Li did not appreciate the true significance of the question in the least.

The ratification of a treaty of friendship and commerce between Portugal and China took place at Tientsin, in the new Admiralty buildings on the 28th April, 1887, H.E. Li Hung-chang acting on behalf of the Emperor of China, and H.E. Senhor Roza on behalf of the King of Portugal. After the ceremony Li gave a farewell dinner to the Portuguese Minister, and it was attended by the foreign consuls and the local mandarins. During the dinner Li proposed the health of the King of Portugal, and Senhor Roza proposed that of the Emperor of China, while the Viceroy's band played at intervals. On the 1st instant, H.E. Senhor Roza and his interpreter, Senhor P. Nolasco da Silva, left Tientsin for Shanghai.

There I remember seeing them part, the Secretary returning to Portugal first, and how Senhor Roza bent forward, gazing after his departing friend, waving his handkerchief till it was impossible to see anything more. Then when he looked round his eyes were full of tears. He was a fine, handsome man, of distinguished bearing, and he said as an apology: "When one has gone through such long trying negotiations together, one cannot but feel very much at parting from the friend who has sustained one." I had met him several times during the negotiations at Peking, and had no idea they had tried him so much. But he had every reason to feel satisfied with the result, for China confirmed the perpetual occupation and government of Macao and its dependencies by Portugal, whilst Portugal engaged never to alienate Macao and

its dependencies without agreement with China; and lovely old picturesque Macao, with its old-world charm, would be like a jewel to any Power that knew how to utilise its fine position. Unfortunately Portugal does not, and the stately three-storied houses along the Praza, built by Portuguese for their own delight, are mostly falling into the hands of Chinese, who trade and prosper where Portuguese are unable to make a living.

CHAPTER XV.

PERSONAGES AND PERSONAL MATTERS (1887—1889).

In this scarce year 1887 we find quite a series of Decrees requesting Li to find money; on February 12th—

A Decree directing the Governor-General Li Hung-chang to order the Financial Commissioner of Chihli to forward 12,000 taels without delay to a certain General, who was in immediate want of funds for the repair of roads, bridges, and rest-houses, in anticipation of the Imperial visit to the Western Mausolea at the end of the third moon.

On February 17th—

A Decree calling upon the Governor-General Li Hung-chang to remit to the treasury of the custodians of the Imperial Mausolea before the end of the first moon the sum of 10,000 taels, which was required to make preparations for the Imperial visit.

Then again to send 30,000 taels before the 4th of March to the Board of War, being part of the debt of 40,000 taels due to that department on land rents. This sum was urgently required to make preparations for the Imperial visit to the Mausolea.

And on February 28th—

A Decree ordering the Governor-General Li Hung-chang to send 3,000 taels at once to the custodian of the Western Mausolea, who requires the money to make preparations for the approaching Imperial visit. This sum is an instalment of the arrears of rent due on Government lands in An-chou and other districts in Chihli.

It was much about this time that there appeared on the scenes one of those strange characters that are always arriving in China, promising to accomplish everything:

brilliant comets that rise suddenly above the horizon and then as suddenly disappear. In this instance it was Count Mitkiewicz from Warsaw, the precursor of Luzzatti, Pritchard Morgan, and one knows not how many yet to come. But none seems to have obtained such a hold over Li as Mitkiewicz. He was to start a bank for China, he was to run the Chinese Empire, he got concessions for everything, and all his papers were said to be properly signed and in order; yet directly the bearer of concessions, of photographs and letters from Li, of an Imperial Edict and much else besides, landed once more in San Francisco, all sorts of scandals were unearthed. According to a telegram from Warsaw, Mitkiewicz was not even a count, and he and his difficult name passed back into the obscurity from which they sprang. Before this, however, the Dowager Empress is said to have ordered Li to stop the negotiations about the American-Chinese Bank. It is evident that either the Dowager had a far keener intellect than the veteran statesman, or that she had an adviser of far greater business ability. And at once rumour indicates the mock eunuch, Li Lien-ying, as the power behind the throne: the man supposed to own pawn-shops or banks all through Peking, the man who would demand 10,000 taels or so for an interview with the Empress, the man whom Chinese commonly speak of as really Tze Hsi's husband. But for someone's interference it is certainly clear that Li would have got mixed up after a yet more compromising fashion than was the case with that self-proclaimed saviour of society—Mitkiewicz from Warsaw.

It is generally said in the West of China that the only way to get on in business is to get heavily into debt, for no one is interested in pushing a man who is solvent, whilst, in the other case, all his creditors are so; as it is their only chance of ever being paid. How far this method holds good over China generally it is difficult to ascertain. But there certainly seems to be a generally received idea in the East, that, when a man is disgraced and has no friends, that is the moment to attach him to your side; because then, having nothing but your

support to stand between him and ruin, there is nothing he need hesitate to do in pushing your interests. Some people say it is on this principle that Russia arranged for Li to be sent as envoy to the Moscow coronation, and that she now stands by the Dowager Empress; knowing that the latter is so universally hated in China, that she must absolutely rely upon Russian support. In any case this principle may, to a certain extent, account for Li's choice of friends. It is noticeable that wherever Chang Chih-tung has held high place, he has left a school of somewhat sterling ardent reformers behind him—in Canton, in Szechuan, and elsewhere; probably also at Nanking, though of this I cannot speak from personal experience. As a rule, wherever one meets with an official, disliked but respected by other officials because of his incorruptibility, the explanation is always "Oh, one of Chang Chih-tung's set!" Indeed, "a relation," is generally added.

Li, on the other hand, seems to have gathered all the most hopelessly corrupt men in China round him, his special friends during this period being Liu Ping-chang, Viceroy of Szechuan, on whose permanent exclusion from office the British Government was at last obliged to insist, because he so evidently fomented the disturbances against foreigners in his province in 1895; and Shang, for years Li's special protégé, then his decidedly treacherous rival, and now occupying the best posts in China for making money, as Administrator of Railways, Mines, Telegraphs, etc. Li had recently been worsted by a censor who had memorialised the Throne against a cashiered officer, whom he was employing. The officer's record was so bad that the censor carried his point, and the Emperor ordered the defaulter to be dismissed. It was then that Li applied for the services of the now celebrated Shang, then a cashiered judge from Fukien.

Again, when Cheng Ki-tong had to leave the Chinese Legation and Paris, because of some affair about a cheque, the signature to which he was accused of having meddled with, and returned to China with a French lady as his wife—exciting the more comment in Shanghai because he had already there an English wife in charge of the children of

his first Chinese wife, said to be dead—it was at Li's Viceregal Court that he found a shelter when pursued by justice. And it was not even as if the late attaché had been a man of distinguished parentage and antecedents, who might already have been in many ways linked with Li. For as he had been a manservant waiting at dinner in a European house of business, like not a few other men floated by the Chinese Government as fit to associate with diplomatists in Europe, his antecedents were well known. Cheng Ki-tong was at first sought for as a criminal, but Li's favour secured liberty for Cheng, and for Li, the services of a clever, unscrupulous man, who could not stand without his support.

Now in 1888 Li emphasised this preference of his for men of ability, whose characters could hardly be called doubtful, by insisting on marrying his daughter to one who has been often spoken of as his evil genius, Chang P'ei-lun; who besides many other misdeeds, when appointed to the defence of the Foochow Coast, not only had made no preparation to resist the French attack, but "even had the audacity, when his fleet was finally destroyed, to report that he had gained a complete victory, and had sunk two of the French ironclads." For this Chang had been exiled to Manchuria, but Li managed to obtain his return to favour, as also that of the admiral who had commanded the fleet and had been likewise banished. Li's daughter, as well as her mother, protested vehemently against the marriage, but Li carried his point and there were great wedding festivities in the autumn.

Whether as a retribution or in consequence of too much wine drinking—for the Chinese attach great importance to what they call big-wine capacity, and think it a quality to be greatly admired—Li almost directly afterwards had a stroke of facial paralysis, which, although not serious, caused some apprehension; as the removal of the great Viceroy from his post from any cause would produce important changes in China.

The account in the *Peking Gazette* of March, 1889, is that Li had—

LI HUNG-CHANG'S WIFE (1871).

(From a photo by Messrs. Thomson, Grosvenor Street, W.)

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caught a severe cold in his head which affected the muscles of his face, and produced great thirst and redness of the eyes. He obtained at first twenty days' leave, and was subsequently granted two extensions of a month each, on both of which occasions the Emperor expressed great solicitude about the state of his health, and urged him to procure the best medical advice available. Prince Ch'un sent him twenty pills which had been specially prepared in the palace, one of which was to be taken every day before food.

During the last month the redness of the eyes has greatly disappeared, there has been a stoppage of the tears, and his face has no longer the drawn appearance it formerly had. The doctor's bulletin states that the disease is already eight parts gone. The muscles are, however, still weak, and the patient will require to keep out of the wind and take rest. With the mildness of spring he will be able to go out once more, and under the vivifying influences of that health-giving season his muscles will resume their proper functions. The patient expresses himself profoundly grateful for the many tokens of regret which he has received from the Throne, and assures the Emperor that nothing is farther from his thoughts than to take his ease at such a moment as the present. Though he has been on leave for the past month he has been daily occupied in transacting business and seeing his subordinates, and has often forgotten to take his food until after the going down of the sun. All through the stillness of the night his mind has been troubled with the thought that his sickness might cause some miscarriage of public business; now, however, that his sickness is gradually disappearing, he proposes to cancel his leave, and resume entire supervision of his office.—*Rescript:* We have carefully perused the above, and must again urge upon the patient to be still more careful in sparing himself anxiety and labour, and to continue a course of medical treatment, in the hope that his early restoration to health may remove the earnest solicitude which we feel on his behalf.

During the month the Viceroy's eldest son arrived at Tientsin, having come from London—where, as also in Paris, he had been Secretary of Legation—in order to pass his examination as Chun-tze; but after all it seems he could not go up for it, since a relation had been appointed examiner; thus rendering it impossible according to Chinese usage. Lord Li had also come to celebrate the birthday of his mother (by

adoption). There was a grand Chinese dinner at the Viceroy's Yamên to Chinese officials. Li seems to have been well again. But paralysis is apparently the great foe of Chinese officials, for one after another is recorded as dying of it. Prince Ch'un, the Emperor's father, was even now labouring under general paralysis; he could barely walk with the assistance of two helpers, his left hand could not move, and with his right hand he was unable to sign his name. It had already been reported in the papers that he was dead, a statement repeated more than once before the end came, as also that he had vowed to repair all the temples in the capital if he should recover. The taking of a vow of this sort is not unusual among wealthy Chinese, and the repairs of many well-known temples have come about in this way.

Meanwhile, Li Han-chang, Li's elder brother, and formerly Governor-General of Hupeh and Hunan, had been appointed Inspector-General of the Grain Transport; a post of considerable standing, and if railways were to be built under his auspices, likely to become of still greater importance. Li Han-chang carried anything but a good reputation as Viceroy into retirement a few years before, and as he had been in Peking for some months seeking an appointment, it seems as if he had had some difficulty in obtaining one. He was commonly known in China as "the bottomless purse," and whilst some Europeans defend Li Hung-chang against the charges of peculation and avarice—I have never met a Chinese who did so—neither Europeans nor Chinese defend either Li Han-chang or Li Hung-chang's sons from charges of the kind; which are brought against them in so very gross a form that I always feel unable personally to accept them; with regard, at least, to Lord Li—with whom I have conversed more than once—who has very pleasing manners, and, I should say, a good countenance. Yet men who have had business dealings with him ought to know best, and they are unanimous. There were now great family rejoicings over this appointment of Li Han-chang's; and presently another son of Li's was appointed second-class Assistant Secretary, in commemoration of the Emperor's twentieth birthday.

Meanwhile also there had been great doings at the Court, as duly recorded in the *Peking Gazette*. Our own Court Circular would not be half such interesting reading.

November 8th, 1888. (1.) Since the Emperor reverently entered upon the succession to the great patrimony he has been gradually growing up to manhood, and it is fitting that a person of high character should be selected to be his Consort and assist him in the duties of the palace, to the end that the high position of Empress may be fittingly filled and the Emperor be supported in the pursuit of virtue. The choice having fallen upon Yeh-ho-na-la, the daughter of Deputy-Lieutenant General Kuei Hsiang, a maiden of virtuous character and becoming and dignified demeanour, we command tha she be appointed Empress.

(2.) We command that T'a-t'a-la, aged 15, the daughter of Ch'ang Hsü, a former Vice-president of a Board, be raised to a position of concubine of the fourth degree, and that another daughter of the same officer, aged 13, be appointed another concubine of the same degree.

Kuei Hsiang was a younger brother of the Empress Dowager, as also of the Emperor's mother; and consequently the future Empress was a cousin of the Emperor. Ch'ang Hsü, the father of the two sisters who were to become Imperial concubines, was formerly Vice-president of the Board of Punishments, and died some three or four years before. Some time before his death he got into trouble for having on a day of official mourning betrothed one of his daughters to the son of Pao-heng, then Acting Governor of Shansi. Not that this last curious little fact has special bearing on the important matter in hand.

The Emperor is supposed to make the final choice himself, by moving his sceptre slightly in the direction of the young lady he chooses as worthy to be Empress out of those selected, and again re-selected for him by the Empress Dowager; and according to Chinese report, he was indicating another young lady, when Tze Hsi, with that decision that never forsakes her, seized the sceptre in his hand and herself directed it towards her niece. Yek-no-na-la was said to be of a character somewhat like her own, and her age was twenty-four; while

the Emperor was only eighteen. To give, as usual, a contemporary account of the ceremony :—

First came four horsemen as heralds, followed at a short distance by a large cavalcade of more horsemen, headed by the two Imperial Commissioners appointed to escort the bride ; then followed nine pairs of white ponies with yellow trappings, two deep, led by men ; then came two yellow pavilions, followed by two large yellow satin carts, each drawn by one white pony ; next two large yellow satin sedan chairs with eight bearers. These were followed by a huge crowd of bannermen, in large red flowered robes carrying horn-lanterns with the character "felicity" painted upon them ; then came halberdiers with large round yellow silk fans or screens, and two closed silk umbrellas of each of the five colours, and last of all came the bride's or Phœnix chair in yellow satin with what at the distance appeared as glass panels with painted Phœnixes (hence the name) in satin on the inside, carried by sixteen bearers, and the rear of the procession was brought up by horsemen. Large yellow buttons adorned the top of the first cart, and the bride's chair. At two o'clock a.m. the procession returned to the Palace, carrying the bride and the two young concubines. The streets were beautifully lighted with fixed lamps on each side at short distances. The numerous bearers carried lighted lamps in the procession. The night was intensely cold. There was no music, and the chair was yellow not red, in these two respects differing from all other Chinese marriages. On March 4th the Legation flags were again at the mast top, in honour of the assumption of the reins of Government by the Emperor, the Empress that morning having officially given up charge. The bride's father was created a duke on the occasion, and further had the rank of Tartar Generalissimo conferred on him. A few days before the Imperial bridal trousseau was taken in. It was divided into two portions, each of three hundred pieces. All was carried in by men, one part two days before the proper day, and the final part on the day before, or on the 25th February. The gates and doors of the palace were ornamented by silk lattices, and the whole of the way from the palace to the bride's house was carpeted.

Thus Tze Hsi, ex-concubine of the Emperor Tao Kwang, not satisfied with having placed her sister's son upon the great Dragon throne, now set her brother's daughter by his

side. On the 30th of April following, the young Empress performed her first State function, when, accompanied by some ladies of the Court, she revived the old practice of worshipping at the Temple of the Goddess of Sericulture, which had been in abeyance for the last thirty years. This function was not performed by the Empress of T'ung Chih, and owing to its long discontinuance, the officials of the Imperial household experienced considerable difficulty in endeavouring to reproduce the old rites. One feature of the ceremony is the picking of the mulberry leaves, and the trees from which these were gathered on this occasion had been specially planted some years before in anticipation of the custom being revived. The Imperial journey to the Tombs was accomplished this year without any contretremps whatever. The Emperor had a chair, a cart, and a horse, so that he could vary his mode of travel. He was again seen and described as "rather a handsome young man, somewhat pale, but with a very intelligent face"; the Empress Dowager as "of extraordinary force, very well preserved, her features denoting great strength of will." The most striking characteristic of the whole cortège was the irreproachable freshness of everything, so different from ordinary Oriental processions. Everything was new, or newly done up; chairs, carts, harness and accoutrements, the uniforms of the troops, etc. The mules and horses were also very elegant. The procession, which numbered more than 10,000 men, had an air of brilliancy and splendour to which Peking was little accustomed.

The achievements of the Dowager Empress Tze Hsi are certainly remarkable. Her nephew, by her management, was Emperor, her niece Empress. Yung-lu, believed by many to be now ruling the destinies of China, is a near kinsman. And yet again and again it is repeated throughout Europe that she herself was a Cantonese slave girl. Even in China there are Chinese who declare she is by birth a Cantonese. There are, indeed, Chinese who will declare that, although she was the daughter of the not very exalted military official, who passed as her father, yet she was not the daughter of his wife

but of a woman who had a European father; and that it is the European blood in her veins that accounts for her masterful character, and her piercing eyes. This last theory is very fascinating, till one discovers that Tze Hsi is not without precedent in Chinese history. There have been before her the Empress Lü, and the still more extraordinary Empress Wu.

According to an article in the *North China Herald* of 1885 the first Emperor of the Han Dynasty (B.C. 206 to A.D. 220), always regarded as one of the most glorious in Chinese history, abdicated in favour of his son; when the Empress Dowager Lü "usurped the Throne and reigned wickedly and unjustly for eight years. Jealousy of a more youthful and beautiful rival, the Lady Ch'i, had, even in the lifetime of the Emperor, developed all that was evil in the nature of this woman; and it is related that her vengeance at length prompted her to cut off her rival's hands and feet, put out her eyes, render her deaf and dumb, and then throw her alive upon a dunghill, bidding her young son go and inspect for himself the 'human sow.' When, on the death of both the old and young Emperors,—the latter of whom died a drivelling imbecile, in horror at his mother's crimes—she assumed full power in the State, her reign was a series of the most mischievous political intrigues, and her decease was hailed with deep and heartfelt satisfaction in all parts of her dominions.

"One of the inferior concubines of the reigning sovereign, the future Empress Wu, a woman of low birth, said to have been extraordinarily fascinating, retired from Court on the death of her protector and embraced a religious life. But eventually she was discovered in her convent by the successor of the monarch, and, after years of the cleverest and most audacious intrigue, found herself in a position of power which for an entire generation proved absolutely unassailable. She was the female counterpart of the great, bad sovereign who burnt the books, boiled the sages, buried courtiers alive, and arrogated to himself the title of 'The First Emperor.'

"Stories of her strange extravagances are legion. Everybody has read how she even claimed authority over Nature, and caused the pink peonies to bloom at her command; how

she had one good, great councillor to whom she remained steadfast throughout, in spite of her evil propensities; how she strengthened her power by foreign alliances; how she altered the style of her reign no fewer than seventeen times; how she attempted to change the mode of writing Chinese characters; how she held the reins of government for over twenty years in the teeth of the universal execration with which she was regarded; and how, in spite of the actual existence of a real Emperor on the one hand, and the Salic law on the other, she assumed and was accorded the title of 'Most Holy Emperor' herself. She was eventually deposed, but she lived her life out in a splendid palace, and passed away peacefully at the last. Her memory and the memory of the Empress Lü are both infamous, and the Chinese point to the reigns of these two women as justifications of the national policy with respect to the exclusion of women."

Although the Dowager Empress of to-day has not yet, like Wu, gone so far as to try to alter the Chinese method of writing, yet it is possible that future ages may hold her in greater horror than these Empresses; for in her reign the Holy Places of Peking, and even the burial-places of the dead Emperors, have been defiled. However her reign may end, that she must in the end be classed along with the arch-fiends Lü and Wu seems inevitable.

In June of this year, 1889, we find Li engaged on one of those questions which emphasise the multifarious character of a Viceroy's duties; namely, the repairing of a great roadway. He writes a memorial, stating that "the pass leading from Nank'ou through Chüyung Kuan up to the Great Wall is one of the great thoroughfares connecting Peking with Mongolia and the northern parts of the Empire. The mountainous region in this vicinity was regarded by former dynasties as a barrier against invasion, but under the enlightened influence of the present reigning family a closer connection has been maintained with the vast extent of country lying beyond the Wall. As a consequence the pass is largely frequented by Mongolian princes and tribute missions visiting Peking, while it is also the main route

for the conveyance of mails and Government supplies to the border country on the north and north-west part of the Empire. For more than two hundred years it has never received any repairs on a large scale. Running for a distance of nearly fifteen miles through an overhanging mass of high hills and precipitous cliffs, it became in summer and autumn a raging torrent, and in winter was a succession of frozen sheets of water, which often proved fatal to man and beast.

"The pass came to be regarded with such dread by all travellers that some improvement in its condition was viewed as an absolute necessity. The great difficulty was the question of expense. Chihli being a province whose exchequer shows an annual deficit, no assistance was to be expected from public funds. Four years ago a conference of the district officers was held, and amongst those present were several prefects. Extensive inquiries were made amongst the elders and gentry of the neighbourhood, with the result that public opinion was clearly shown to be in favour of levying a contribution on passing animals for the repair of the pass. Offices were accordingly established, and a toll of from two to ten cash was collected upon all camels, mules, oxen, horses, donkeys, and other animals passing up and down. Exception was, however, made in favour of horses on government service returning without a load, as also of all beasts of burden carrying firewood or agricultural implements. The length of the pass was measured, and found to be 6,730 chang from Tungpotzu to Langwo. Having regard to the large quantity of stone and other materials required for such a vast work, it was soon found that the proceeds of the contributions from baggage animals were not large enough to warrant its being all undertaken at once, and it was therefore thought advisable to carry it on gradually in sections. The work that remained to be done was still enormous. Hollows had to be filled up, heights had to be levelled down, and in some places a long détour had to be made and an entirely new road constructed." Then followed elaborate calculations as to how the sum required was to be raised. The Viceroy concludes by recommending for various forms of

rewards a number of officials to whose exertions it is due that a pass which a few years ago scarcely afforded a foothold for animals of any kind should now be a thoroughfare for carts and traffic of every kind.

At this time—1889—the great question of the day was that of railways. Chang Chih-tung's proposals had been approved by the Throne, and the Viceroy himself had been transferred to Wuchang, where he would be at the southern terminus of the line of railway he had proposed. Li Hung-chang was undoubtedly strongly in favour of railways, and particularly anxious to see the existing railway continued to Tungchow. The Admiralty (which seems rather an odd board for the purpose) had submitted a memorial on railways, and August 27, 1889, an Edict had come out. "The Sovereign is of the opinion that to make a country powerful railways are essential, but recognising the fact that at the outset the people will have doubts and suspicions, orders the Viceroy and Governors of Chihli, Hupeh, and Honan, to issue explanatory proclamations to them, exhorting and commanding them to throw no impediment in the way. It is the Imperial desire that all shall work together to make this great work a success." Li, meanwhile, had entered into pecuniary and other arrangements, and was annoyed by the delays, fearing always also that a fire might occur in the palace or a breach in the Yellow River embankment, which might be taken by the opponents of railways as an indication of the displeasure of Heaven.

Alas! hardly had this fear been expressed before the beautiful circular pavilion at the Temple of Heaven, covered with azure blue tiles of finest porcelain clay, and built in three tiers— the very pavilion under which the dragon throne was placed—caught fire, so that the whole sky was illuminated. Already before that a palace gate had been burnt down, but this was far more serious. I still remember the shudder with which the news was reported throughout China—"The Temple of Heaven burnt down!—the Temple of Heaven burnt down!" And from that moment the Emperor, in whose reign it had occurred, was regarded as a doomed man. It

was not, however, after all, the great white marble sacrificial altar on which the Emperor alone ascends once in the year to offer atonement for himself and for his people in a remote, lonely place, and which is open to the sky, and has little to burn; yet the event could not but be regarded as the warning of Heaven. And it was remarked by one of the officials in the palace, that just as the proposal to build the Tungchow line had been followed by the burning of the Tai-ho gate, so now the proposal to build the Hankow line was followed by the burning of the Temple of Heaven.

It was about this time that a good man was taken away from the evil to come. The lad whom Tsêng Kwo-fan, on his return from quelling the Taiping rebellion to his home in Hunan, found immersed in literary pursuits, and, of all things in the world, studying an English dictionary, and there in the centre of China slowly and painfully perfecting himself in English—this lad had developed into the Minister at St. James's. Minister to England, as before to France and to Russia, where it had been his duty to set aside Chung How's unfortunate Treaty of Livadia, everyone had formed high hopes of what his influence might effect in Peking when he returned there. He had seemed so pleasant, so enlightened, so friendly in Europe, that it was a great disappointment to find that his Yamên in Peking soon assumed the same neglected, untidy appearance as the other official residences there, whilst he evidently shrank from, rather than sought, intercourse with foreigners. And yet, with all this, he was accounted by his fellow-countrymen such a friend of foreigners that he never even dared return to his native province of Hunan. He seems always to have felt himself at a disadvantage among his own countrymen—men who had never visited foreign countries, but who had been for years carrying on the business of foreign affairs with foreigners. Possibly the Marquis Tsêng felt himself at a loss in other ways, for he may be said to have modelled his conduct in accordance with the wisely beautiful words of his even more distinguished father:—

It is always difficult to know what to do in barbarian affairs. However, the key is never to be found far from the four qualities of Confucius—Loyalty, Genuineness, Truth and Respect. Genuineness means Honesty; Respect means Prudence; for Truth, it simply suffices not to say anything that is untrue; yet this is the most difficult of all; and it is on this word that it behoves us to take our chief hold. Do not allow anything agreed upon to-day to be modified to-morrow, on account of some small advantage or disadvantage.

What statesman nurtured in accordance with Christian teaching has ever given more high-minded advice to a son?

If, however, he was not everywhere appreciated, his amiability and easily flowing conversation charmed the young Emperor; till Tsêng became a daily visitor at the Palace, where Kwang-Shü loved to hear from him about his foreign experiences. Tsêng had long been in the confidence of the Emperor's father, and it must have been a great joy to him to note the eager curiosity of the young Emperor, whose rapid intellectual development seems to have surprised and delighted him. Continued intercourse with the lad, we are told, confirmed the high estimate he had formed of his capacity. Between Emperor and Minister there was respect on one side, traditional reverence on the other, and it is probably no exaggeration to say, affection on both. Amid much distracting care and press of work, with health impaired and rest destroyed by the absurd hours observed at the Chinese Court, the Marquis Tsêng broke down and died. China's loss was not only that an honest and able statesman had gone from her, but that her young Emperor was thus deprived of a sympathetic and sagacious adviser at a time when his counsels would have been of most value. Yet we cannot but imagine that it was during these daily conferences that the aspirations after reform, which afterwards showed themselves in such a startling manner, were first implanted in the youthful monarch; for Weng Tung-ho, his tutor, of a very ancient and renowned family from near Soochow, a man who for years exercised a tremendous influence over his pupil, had always been so strongly opposed to foreign ways, that it was feared that his opposition

would even prevent the introduction of railways. But the Emperor's gentle friend, the one time "little Tsêng Chi-tsé" of the great Tsêng Kwo-fan, died. Every day crowds of officials arrived to make their prostrations before the coffin, whilst all felt the greatest sympathy with his tall, gracious widow, the Lady Peach Blossom, and the rest of the mourning family. Then the old Viceroy at Nanking told the story of a remarkable dream; how he had seen his brother in a most exalted place in Heaven, and asked if he were happy, and the other had replied that he had his family and relations round him, had reached a very high state of happiness, and could not wish to be more so. The day after the dream came the unexpected news of the death of the Marquis; and the Viceroy (recalling it, and connecting it with this sad news) was at once consoled; and so, said the Chinese papers, were the rest of the family. But it did not seem so when I met them in after years.

The death of the Marquis Tsêng was incidentally seized upon as a pretext for postponing any further consideration of the Hankow Railway; and a decree was issued:—

In reply to a memorial from the Viceroy of Chihli, Li Hung-chang, setting forth the high qualifications of the late Tsêng Chi-tsé, and praying that his biography may be incorporated among the chronicles of State, His Majesty, after touching on the worthy manner in which the deceased Minister filled the post of envoy abroad, the highly satisfactory way in which, as a member of the Tsungli Yamên, he conducted international relations with Foreign Powers, and the valuable assistance rendered by him in connection with the organisation of the newly-formed Admiralty Board, commands that a biography of the late Minister be enrolled among the records of the State Historian's office, and that as a mark of special favour, a title of canonisation be conferred upon him, in token of the lasting regard with which His Majesty cherishes the memory of a loyal servant of the Throne.

The *Shihpao* then announced:—"Lord Li is expected by a great majority to take the place of the late Marquis Tsêng in the Diplomatic Service; he is comparatively a young man, of about thirty-five years of age, having an energetic mind to perform the nation's work; with his father's rank and power

he can do more in the affairs of State than any ordinary official even of high rank. It is said that Lord Li has a fair command of the English language, an invaluable *vade mecum* for a diplomat at the Court of the Mikado, where English is the Court language. The Government has made a wise choice in appointing Lord Li as Minister to Japan, for he will surely bring these two sister nations into closer friendship by his genial manner and diplomatic tact which he acquired while at the Court of St. James as Secretary of Legation.

"The rumour of the death of Prince Ch'un is not confirmed. He went into a sinking fit, remaining unconscious about four hours, hence the report. His recovery is supposed to be due to the prayers of the Emperor, who held a Buddhist image in his hands till his father revived."

À propos of this we learn that the seventh Prince was a universal favourite. When the Viceroy, Li Hung-chang, offered to pave several of the main avenues of the city at his own expense, the kind-hearted Prince gained the everlasting gratitude of the small hucksters in Peking by refusing to allow this paving, which would have interfered with their business. He could not withstand the petitions of the poor, and the streets remain in their filth as before. Visitors to Peking can hardly feel equally grateful to him. Notwithstanding this, we are told that he was desirous of improvement and progress in China. He was in favour of railroads and steamships. The Emperor had nearly completed a magnificent residence for his father in the northern part of the city; but here have we no abiding city, and so Prince Ch'un, too, passed away, and from being styled officially "The Father who gave birth to the Emperor," he became the "Emperor's Father," and lost his own name of Prince Ch'un, to be known to history as "Prince Virtuous"; for, says the Empress Dowager, "concerning all the posthumous honours, the most essential is the alteration of name. . . . Let the laudatory title be 'Virtuous,' so as to make manifest his loyal services and moral excellence, and may it be handed down from generation to generation for ever. Let the Chinkuo Duke, Chai L'e, Prince Ch'un's second son, and

the Emperor's brother, succeed immediately to the hereditary princedom of the first rank, so as to show our deep regard for a near and virtuous relative." All business went on as usual, and only the Emperor himself wore mourning for his father.

Instructions, however, were given by the Empress Dowager that the obsequies were to be conducted according to the regulations laid down for those of an Imperial Prince. "The Emperor will himself make out an inscription for a memorial tablet, which tablet shall be roofed in with yellow tiles. On the expiry of the first year's mourning, and on the day on which he comes out of mourning, the Emperor will hold a service conducted according to the rites of the greater sacrifices, and will himself read the service. On the day prior to the committal of the body to the ground, he will hold a similar service at its temporary resting place, and on the day itself respectfully accompany the cortège. On the day after he will again worship at the grave. The yearly rites in connection with the tomb shall be performed by the Prince succeeding to the title. Out of respect to the memory of the deceased the character Huan, the name of the Prince, is henceforth not to be used in writing."

Then follows a decree mentioning the high officials at Peking and in the provinces, whom the Emperor, after the triennial examination, finds deserving of special notice and recognition, Li Hung-chang among them.

After noting these important deaths, we may remind ourselves of the position and the career of some of China's surviving notabilities. Chang Chih-tung, so often before mentioned, was third in the metropolitan examination in 1863, and was appointed Judicial Commissioner in Kuang-tung in March, 1865, and Financial Commissioner in May, 1868. He was made Governor of Shansi in January, 1882, and Viceroy of Kwangsi and Kwangtung in August, 1884; then in 1890 appointed Viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh. He is one of the two staunch Yangtse Viceroys to whom so many Europeans owe their lives.

The second of these is Liu K'un-yi, a Hunan man, who,

it was thought at first, would not take up his post at Nanking as Viceroy of Kiangsu Kiangsi and Anhui; partly because of his great age, and partly because of his devotion to opium. He was in the habit of smoking two ounces a day, which habit, he said, he had contracted during his military career, when opium was the only means he could find of relieving his fatigue and alleviating the privations and hardships to which he was exposed. Also because of his tendencies towards Mormonism in domestic matters, which he explained by himself by the fact that he was old and childless, and it behoved him to leave no resource untried in order to get a son to perform the rites for him after his decease. And lastly, because of his great wealth. He was said to have made 200,000 taels during the eight months in which he had charge of the superintendence of customs in Canton. The reports about him were like those about Liu Ming Chuan, Governor of Formosa, of whom it was said: "The daughters of the people fill the Governor's harem." But it must be remembered that at that time it was thought Liu K'un-yi's fondness for opium and Mormonism would but commend him to the Empress Dowager, popularly accused at the time of both tastes. Though the opium charge is incredible, Tze Hsi was regarded as a great invalid during the lifetime of Tze An, the other Empress Regent, and then curiously enough it was the other who died, Tze Hsi becoming the extraordinarily vigorous ruler she had ever since appeared, always looking younger than her years, too.

Besides these prominent men, there was also Li Han-chang, Li Hung-chang's elder brother, an Anhui man and a Licentiate. He was Taotai in Kwangsi in 1862, Grain Commissioner in Kwangtung in February, 1863, then Judicial Commissioner there, and subsequently Financial Commissioner in the same year. In March, 1865, he was appointed Governor of Hunan, and was transferred to the same post in Kiangsu in 1867 and in Chekiang in 1868. In September, 1870, he was appointed Viceroy of Kwangsi and Kwangtung, removed to Szechuan in January, and restored to Kwangsi and Kwangtung in October, 1876. He went into

mourning in 1882, and was appointed Director-General of Grain Transport the following October. Although seventy years of age he was still vigorous when now appointed once more to be Viceroy of Kwangsi and Kwangtung, to the great dissatisfaction of the Cantonese. There was also Kang-Yi, the new Governor of Kiangsu, since known as the Lord High Extortioner, a Manchu. Yuan-shih Kai, Yung Lu, and Yü-hsien were hardly heard of then, nor was Prince Tuan yet talked of among Europeans. Of Shang, then still Li's protégé, we have already spoken. There were beside these Li Hung-chang and the rest of his family.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VISIT OF THE CZAREVITCH.

In 1891, the Czarevitch, then on his tour round the world, paid a visit to China; which demands to be recorded in a separate chapter, although Li does not personally appear in the attendant celebrations.

Early in the year the *Chinese Times* had related how the Emperor said, "We add the further wish that the relations between China and other countries may in future take the friendliest form." It described Kwang-Shü, at the same time, as rather pale and dark with a well-shaped forehead, long, black, arched eyebrows, large, mournful, dark eyes, a sensitive mouth, and an unusually long chin. The young Emperor, we are told, together with an air of great gentleness and intelligence, wore an expression of melancholy—due, naturally enough, to the deprivation of nearly all the pleasures of his age and to the strict life, which the hard and complicated duties of his high position forced him to lead. The recent death of his father might have been added to these causes.

When the Czarevitch, who is to-day ruler over All the Russias, visited China, the Viceroy Chang Chih-tung expressed his intention of not making any preparations for his reception unless he were ordered to do so by an Imperial Edict; and he does not seem to have been reprimanded. The Czarevitch was brought at once up the Yangtse to Hankow, almost the centre of China, in the middle of what has since been so often called the British sphere of influence, but certainly is the seat of the great Russian brick-tea industry;

comprising the wealthiest colony in China, thanks to the Russians there possessing a monopoly of the brick-tea trade with Russia. In the end the Czarevitch and Prince George of Greece lunched for five hours with the Viceroy Chang Chih-tung, on April 20, 1891, at the picturesque temple at Hanyang, the Viceroy's visit having been the first the Czarevitch received on arriving, and this lunch being the return call. From the luncheon the two Princes came to the magnificent Russian banquet at Hankow. Hankow and Hanyang are only divided from one another by the river Han, which there flows into the Yangtse, while the Viceregal city of Wuchang is separated from both of them by the Yangtse itself, there about half a mile in width.

A special table had been prepared for the Czarevitch, but he requested to sit with other people, so his seat was placed in the middle of the long table running all down one side of the immense dining hall, Mr. Molotkoff's godown really. He was seated between two ladies, in a chair covered with Chinese old gold satin, buttoned down with golden nails; opposite sat Prince George of Greece, who declined a similar golden chair, which had been prepared for him. There was another table running the whole length of the room, at only one side of which seats were placed, so that no one should turn his back on Royalty, the guests being estimated at 149. The room was most elaborately draped with red, blue and white, the Russian colours, and all round it stood tall flowering plants in pots, pink peonies showing out specially, and palms being placed behind the Royal seat. The decorations on the table were confined to leaves arranged in H's and A's, H being the Russian N for Nikolai. There were a few toasts proposed, but no regular speeches, although the Czarevitch said a few words of thanks when his health was drunk. Prince George, then a fine-looking young fellow, fair and of a genial countenance, did not return thanks.

During the dinner a sort of colossal opera box was erected at the entrance to the banqueting hall, and to this the whole party adjourned a little before ten to see the fireworks and illuminations. The former were Cantonese, and probably

intended for a courtyard, being too intricate to admire at any distance, letting down cascades of lanterns, and troops of dolls that danced in the heat. Though more elaborate they were less romantic than those of the night before, set off from boats and thus gaining from the reflection in the water. But the illuminations were quite fairy-like, and Hankow Bund never looked so well before, and possibly never will again. Crowds of naval officers arrived, the Germans all speaking English perfectly, and a little before ten appeared the Czarevitch and Prince George of Greece, with a great following of uniforms; the Russian *Chargé d'Affaires* (acting in the absence of his chief, Count Cassini), having come especially from Peking for the occasion, and one or two others being in diplomatic uniform. They had been detained at the entrance by a Chinese deputation from the Tea Guilds of Hankow, and the four Tea Provinces of Hunan, Hupeh, Shansi and Canton, who presented an address, and made speeches thanking the Emperor of Russia for his protection and hospitality to Chinese engaged in the Tea Trade in Russia, and also thanking the Czarevitch for having come to Hankow, the centre of the Tea industry. The Prince replied that he would tell the Czar, his father, what they had said; and then the beautifully dressed deputation disappointed everyone by withdrawing, and not assisting at the entertainment although they had been duly invited. The Czarevitch was then a slight stripling with brown hair, his mother's eyes and forehead, but his father's mouth, and with a very sweet expression indicative of great amiability, as also of a naturally affectionate disposition; but he appeared very shy, and hardly spoke during the dinner.

About midnight the Princes were sent off between flaming torches of Bengal light, held by the various gentlemen, and this seemed by the Chinese to be looked upon as the most curious part of the proceedings. In spite of the barricades to keep them out, a great part of the Bund was a serried mass of Chinese, and there were thousands of boats lining it, and adding very much to the general effect. And one could not help feeling an infinite pity for the gentle, pleasant-looking

young man, whose future destiny one seemed to read so unmistakably in his features during the two hours of that dinner.

The last day of his visit was pervaded by a spirit of uncertainty and conflicting rumours. At last the great luncheon had finished beneath a most brilliant awning of flags on the deck of the Russian man-of-war *Vladivostock*, and Chinese launches whistled wildly. All the men-of-war, two Chinese, two Russian, one English, and one German, manned yards, the Germans, who alone wore white trousers, looking the most effective, whilst the Chinese were the most original. Then the sun set in orange brilliance behind a mass of Chinese soldiers in orange, scarlet, and green, making them look like so many brilliant parrots among the greenery upon the Bund, and the *Vladivostock* started down river, followed by the *Koreyetz* and the *Bobr*, the *Tehhsing*, with a large gathering of the Russian community, and the *Yuenwo* with the privileged few, who were to get down to Kiukiang to prepare for the Prince.

All three days the weather was calm and lovely, so that the illuminations were seen to full advantage; and so great was the enthusiasm that not only houses on the Bund were illuminated, but those in back streets, where certainly the Royal visitors would never see them. But for a telegram announcing the death of the Grand Duke Alexander's mother it was understood that all would have been yet grander.

At Kiukiang the reception was only semi-private, and great was the disappointment of the Chinese crowd that the Czarevitch in felt hat and tweed suit was dressed just like any other foreigner. But here again nothing could surpass the good behaviour and good humour of the Chinese. Carpets were laid down, and soldiers of the district, uncommonly tall for Chinamen, with big black turbans and picturesque uniforms like court cards, lined the landing-stage, their quaint tridents being stacked at intervals. The British Consul and the Commissioner of Customs were the only outsiders invited to what was otherwise a purely Russian reception.

At Nanking great was the array of flags lining the river

bank and the canal shore. But there the Prince was not to land, only to receive and be received upon the river. And thus concluded the visit to China of the Heir to All the Russias, in whose hands, at the present time, rest the destinies of so many millions. For it was impossible that fitting arrangements should be made for him to meet that other young man of like age, already nominally ruling over Chinese millions, and thus Peking remained unvisited. It must have been for some reason considered disadvantageous to Russian policy that the heir to All the Russias should see the Manchu Emperor of China. Probably it would have made a difference if they had met. At any rate, I have many a time wondered since whether the two persons most concerned have regretted this half as much as I have, or think, as I do, that had it been possible to arrange otherwise, the destinies of all the world might have been changed, and that great European war cloud which so many of us see looming in the Far East in awful blackness perhaps have been permanently dissipated.

For after all the Emperors of China and Russia are both nominally autocrats—*à propos* of which an amusing story is told of some Russian Minister's conversation with the Emperor of China, which, although it may not be true at all, yet might be so; for everything—even secrets of State—in China is overheard and repeated. The story goes that the Russian Minister urged upon the Emperor of China that those two countries ought to be specially friendly, because they alone were governed according to the principles of propriety and decorum, the sovereign decreeing and the people obeying. In England and Germany, he said, there were also sovereigns, but there the people interfered and had a voice. In Germany it is four-tenths people and six-tenths Emperor; in England it is even six-tenths people and only four-tenths sovereign. In France and America it is too terrible; there is no ruler at all—only the stupid people doing just as they please. In China and Russia alone are the people governed as high Heaven intended, by the direction of the All-wise Ruler. Ought not these two countries, then, to be like two brothers? For if Russia were to fall and to become like these other wild

nations of the earth, then only China would stand, alone—the one Empire as Heaven intended it. And if China were to fall, then Russia would stand all alone in the world. These two countries must, therefore, mutually support one another. Report said the Chinese Emperor was much impressed by the idea.

It was stated as early as 1888, by those who knew what went on in Peking, that the Tsungli Yamên was thoroughly informed by the native employees in the various Legations of the character of every member of those Legations, from the Minister downwards; and that accordingly, whenever a remonstrance or complaint or suggestion came into the Yamên from any Legation, it was received not on its intrinsic merits, but by the light of the information which the Yamên already possessed as to the firmness or otherwise of the writer. The Yamên being thus able to judge perfectly whether the particular document before them was mere words or would be backed by deeds, it is of much more importance at Peking than at a European Court that the foreign representatives should be men of determination, and should be recognised as such by their native staff—men who will only make reasonable requests, but will stick to their demands when they have made them.

Russian Ministers are reported always to say, when they meet with any opposition, "These are my orders, and if you don't agree I don't know what will happen." Then the Chinese Minister considers the matter all round for some time, and at last asks, "And if I don't agree, what will happen?" "That is exactly what I don't know," replies the Russian. "I have got my orders, and they are that I must put this thing through." And they do.

CHAPTER XVII.

PURELY PERSONAL.

As if the cares of a province and of the commercial relations of Northern China, coupled with the responsibility of being special adviser to the Throne, and of being first personage in all China's relations with foreign countries, were not enough for him, Li added to all these the work of authorship.

When Sir Robert Hart, amid all his other work for the regeneration of China, had sixteen volumes of science primers translated by Dr. Edkins, to supply a want felt in the preparatory science schools which were then being inaugurated, particularly at Tientsin, excellent prefaces to the work, inculcating the advantages of a scientific training, and praising the advance made in science in the West, were written by the two foremost statesmen in China, the Viceroy Li and the Marquis Tsêng. And a year afterwards Li undertook to publish a small work in Chinese on Tree Culture, translated by Dr. Edkins from the book on this subject published by the Adelaide Forestry Exhibition; a work which ought to be of value to the Chinese, as the hills in many parts of China are already denuded of trees.

It was on this occasion that Dr. Edkins, while passing through Tientsin on his way to Shanghai, was favoured with an interview with Li, when much conversation took place regarding Christian Missions. To Li's inquiries, Dr. Edkins replied that there were 540,000 Roman Catholic converts and 35,000 Protestant, and the Viceroy pronounced as his opinion that missionaries should confine themselves to moral efforts without teaching religion.

This may recall the conversation that Li had years afterwards with the late Colonel Dyer on the occasion of his visit to Elswick:—

Li Hung-chang: "It is a mistake to suppose that success depends on mental ability. It is all a matter of luck. One man is prosperous and another is poor and downtrodden, not because of any mental qualities that either of them may possess, but just according to their good or bad luck."

Colonel Dyer: "Oh! Then I see that we in Europe have been making a great mistake. We all supposed that it was by his mental ability that Li Hung-chang raised himself to the foremost position in China. Now we must change our views and say that his success was simply due to luck."

Li laughed and enjoyed the compliment as well as the repartee, then said:—

Li Hung-chang: "Men ought always to admire success. I cannot understand why clever men, like some of you Europeans, should actually worship Jesus Christ. Why, that man's life was a failure, and he was actually crucified at the end of it. Now, crucifixion is a very painful death, besides being a degrading form of punishment. How can you call yourselves followers of such a man as that?"

Colonel Dyer: "Well, your Excellency! I don't know what you call failure. When a man's words and the story of his life have influenced many of the best and noblest of men for nearly two thousand years, I don't call that failure."

Jesus Christ's death is apt to be a great trouble to Chinese. One man said, "No, that is too much to believe. For he was a good man. Everything shows he was a good man. I cannot believe in any people, however wicked, putting such a good man to death." Yet during the Boxer outbreak how many thousands of martyrdoms of good men took place in this very same China!

In 1891 a Manual of Therapeutics and Pharmacy in the Chinese language was brought out by the Rev. S. A. Hunter, M.D., for which the Viceroy wrote a Preface. I quote a review written at the time by Mr. Archibald Little, which will throw a good deal of light on Li's intellectual standpoint.

An interesting feature of the book was the preface contributed by Li Hung-chang, which is unstinted in its praise of foreign methods, their exactness and width of range, while, as might be expected, it does more than justice to the ancient native systems. It begins by telling how, in the time of the Han dynasty (B.C. 206 to A.D. 220), eleven celebrated physicians made use of the four classes of prescriptions, and how in the renowned Pen Tsao (of the Sung dynasty) we find 365 kinds of drugs and 113 kinds of formulæ described. Western medical experts, he says, follow on from generation to generation, son succeeding father; halls for medical study are established and honorific degrees awarded for merit. He rightly states that where the Chinese use rough decoctions and make tisanes from their drugs, western chemists make extracts of constant strength and use minute and accurate weights to dole them out with. "The ancients used metal models to exhibit man's inner structure, and Western teachers of medicine have accurate drawings and models also. Now, a Chinese physician should investigate every detail of his art and acquaint himself thoroughly with both native and foreign practice as set forth in the respective books. Dr. Stephen Hunter is a physician of great repute, and his work promotes learning and longevity"; hence H.E. commends it to his countrymen, and is pleased to write a preface, etc.

Li commences with an extract from Pan-koo. This author in his history of the early Han dynasty has a chapter on books, containing the oldest book catalogue possessed by China. We learn from the titles of the books lost that the Divine Husbandman, the Yellow Emperor, and the physician Yu-fu were the first teachers of medicine in the opinion of China in A.D. 100. The names of thirty-nine treatises are given. Of these only two are now in existence. Pan-koo, writing 1,800 years ago, knew of these thirty-nine works. Two of Pan-koo's books are still read, and they contain the old medical theory. What Pan-koo read he has written, and what he wrote our Viceroy has read, and both read believingly. The Viceroy has quoted in the preface the exact words of both of these books as he has also quoted the exact words of Pan-koo in speaking of them. These two books, the Soowen and Ling-choo, are the Hippocrates and Galen of Chinese medicine. All well-informed Chinese readers are acquainted with them. The Viceroy has read them with admiration, but he is surrounded and pressed upon by the influence of the modern period. He has seen and helped in the

work of the medical missionaries in Tientsin. He has read translated works on chemistry, physiology, physics, botany, and various other subjects, and he has no idea of doubting foreign science. He accepts it, but he will not throw aside the old native books. In this preface he does not say whether he still believes in the Yin and Yang principles or not, but he mentions in closing that the book now translated is strictly on the art of healing. He advises readers not to reject it as strange, but to look on it as a work valuable enough to be treasured like a treatise of Ko-hung or Sun Sze-miao, and carefully studied for practical use. He concludes by saying that if the medical student will join Chinese and foreign teaching in one, it will be found that the new addition made to his powers as a healer will be by no means small. From the near he will be able to reach the distant. The world will be better for it. Men will live longer, and the advantage gained will be in truth incalculable. Such was the view of foreign medicine held by Viceroy Li. He thinks he finds the Western doctrine of the nerves in the old medical treatises of his country. Statements on anatomy made by modern Europeans, he fancies, agree with the Han commentator Chêng's views in his notes to the Chow-li. He notices that Buddhism and Taoism have both had influence on Chinese medicine, and there can be no question that alchemy has had full liberty in developing it. As to Indian influence, the anatomical statue in copper five feet high, brought many centuries ago from Nepaul and marked for teaching anatomy, is an indisputable witness, for it is kept at the hall of the Imperial Board of Physicians.

In 1889 Li was encouraged by the gift of the Purple Bridle; in 1891 he was further encouraged by royal presents, and raised two steps in rank; and in 1892 we find him in two elaborately worded and florid memorials, bristling with classical quotations and recondite allusions, rendering thanks to the Emperor and Empress Dowager for the gifts which they bestowed on him on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. Those from the Emperor, who dared not send a greater number than the Empress, as he being a junior had in a manner to give way to his senior, were as follows:—

1. One manuscript tablet; *i.e.* a tablet engraved with characters written by the Emperor himself.

2. A pair of scrolls, likewise in the Imperial handwriting.

3. One scroll with the character *fu* (happiness).
4. One scroll with the character *shou* (long life).
5. One small Buddha.
6. One ju-i inlaid with jade.
7. One dragon robe.
8. Sixteen pieces of "hsiao-chüan" Chiang satin.

The Empress sent the following:—

1. One manuscript tablet.
2. One pair of scrolls written by herself.
3. One scroll with the character *fu*.
4. One scroll with the character *shou*.
5. One scroll with the two characters *shou*, designed by herself.
6. One drawing, also executed by Her Majesty.
7. One Buddha.
8. One robe composed of the throat skins of sables. (This robe is composed of fifty-four pieces of the throat portion of the martin or sable, the middle of each piece being a dark circle, the other parts being yellowish, thus presenting the effect of so many "eyes," as the Chinese call them. These "eyes" are placed in nine rows of three "eyes" each in the front portion of the robe, and similarly arranged at the back. This robe is worn only by the Emperor, and cannot be possessed by anyone else unless presented with such a robe by the Sovereign. Li Hung-chang was the first official of Chinese descent to receive this honour since the reign of the Emperor Lien Lung, 1736-95.)
9. One ju-i inlaid with jade.
10. One dragon robe.
11. Twelve pieces Chiang satin.

These various gifts were sent to Tientsin in charge of the Grand Secretary's nephew, Li Ching-yu, a Hanlin compiler of the second class.

A pamphlet was issued from the Tientsin press containing an excellent, but possibly too eulogistic, biography of the Great Viceroy, followed by an account of the grand Banquet at the Gordon Hall, and translation of the Eulogistic Address to Earl Li on Reaching the Age of Threescore Years and Ten, from H.E. Chang Chih-tung, Viceroy of Hupeh and Hunan, etc., as also from the officials of those provinces.

"Surely you are He," says this address, "that Hofei was destined to bring forth; Councillor, Governor-General of the Metropolitan Province, Naval Minister, Superintendent of Trade, we see you engaged in these quadruple duties, and in each *facile princeps*. You have vindicated your right to all your titles. Our Prince is indeed fortunate in the possession of such a Minister."

This was all in August, 1892, yet it was only on July 1st that the Viceroy's wife, Lady Li, had died from typhoidal malaria. Everything possible had been done to save her. Mrs. King, M.D., was in daily and hourly attendance on her staunch friend, and Dr. Irwin's able services had been enlisted.

Lord Li, the Chinese Minister to Japan, had petitioned the Throne to be allowed to go into retirement on the death of his own mother in the previous year—he had been adopted on his own father's death by Li, many years before—but this was not allowed, and he was only permitted to take one hundred days' leave. Now, however, he was allowed to retire on the death of his adoptive mother, the wife of the Viceroy, Li Hung-chang.

It was not till long after this that the remains of Countess Li were brought to Wuhu, escorted by two armoured cruisers of the Northern squadron. The officials, civil and military, as well as the troops, turned out *en masse* to meet the funeral cortége, and to pay the usual sacrifices to the dead. The coffin was then put into a large boat painted red, for the journey inland to the family mausoleum at Hofei. Nine steam launches, and six large houseboats carried the members of the Li family and their retainers, till the long procession they formed looked more like a holiday turn-out than a funeral. Lord Li, who came down from Tientsin for the purpose, had then been living very quietly at the family seat for the last three months, superintending the building of the mausoleum for his adoptive mother.

If the Japanese vernacular papers were right, which there is no reason to doubt, the necessity for Lord Li's retirement at the time of his adoptive mother's death was very unfortunate. He was recognised at Tokio as the ablest Minister

that China had yet sent there, and was rapidly stifling the jealousies that had so long existed between China and Japan. His efforts towards that end had been greatly assisted by the admirable bearing of Admiral Ting—who made himself most popular at Tokio and Yokohama—and indeed of the whole of the Chinese squadron. The *Mainichi Shimbun* concluded a laudatory article on Lord Li by saying: "We must refer these happy results to the skilful management of the Chinese Minister. He knows how to replace enmity by friendship. Such Ministers are very rare, and we venture to think that if Lord Li has accomplished so much in a short space of time, his continued residence in Japan may entirely change the feeling of this nation towards China."

Thus not only were the Emperor's father, Prince Ch'un, and the Marquis Tsêng gone, but Li was henceforward deprived both of his strong-minded old mother's guidance and his wife's intelligent and kindly partnership. Yet his seventieth birthday was none the less royally celebrated. How different in every detail from Chang Chih-tung, who on the day before his birthday, this very same year, ordered all the yamên doors to be locked, so that when the city officials came in the morning to offer their congratulations, they could not obtain admittance; not an attendant being seen near the doors, which were strongly secured. The officials had to return to their homes without attaining their object. No entertainment was given in the yamên, and everything went on as usual. Next day the Viceroy made a return call on the officials who had taken the trouble to go as far as his front door. He is said to detest heartily all these empty ceremonies, and to look with more favour on a diligent and honest official than on one who kotows all day and speaks fine phrases. Yet one can easily understand that of the two men Li Hung-chang would be the more popular.

The year before his death, the Governor of Anhui, receiving a representation from Li Ching-shu, stated:—

The petitioner's mother is the wife of the Viceroy, Li Hung-chang, with whom she is living in the Province of Chihli.

Economical in her household expenditure, she delights in relieving the distressed, and in times of want distributes among the sufferers all her means. Hearing of the failure of last year's harvest in her native district of Northern Anhui, she has given the petitioner a thousand taels to be sent to the Anhui Relief Fund. At the same time she disclaims all wish of reward. The Governor of the Province, through whose hands the contribution had passed, feels that he ought to bring the matter to the Emperor's notice, and suggests that an arch with a suitable inscription should be erected in honour of the donor at her home in Hofei Hsien.

There are interesting accounts of her visits to the foreign hospital for women, of her fostering new industries in Paoting-fu, and she seems to have been a woman of high ability and force of character, who exercised a powerful but legitimate influence over her distinguished husband; she took a deep interest in work for women, and was a generous coadjutor in every work of charity brought to her notice. She was in her fifty-sixth year, having married Li after the pathetic loss of his first wife and entire family during the early days of the Taiping rebellion.

The Chinese have not yet learnt the art of interviewing and dragging into the full glare of publicity the little domestic details of their great men's lives. So that it is even doubtful whether we shall learn much more about this from the biography of Li, which was taken in hand, on his death, by a learned Chinese, at the instance of Lord Li; a work for which we are told that a six years' search through official records and private papers is a necessary preliminary, so great is the mass of documents that Li has left behind him.

Something, however, we do know of Lady Li, who undoubtedly exercised considerable influence over her husband, while it is probable that her uncertain health was a frequent source of real anxiety to him. A serious illness from which she suffered in 1879 started quite unprecedented relations between the Viceroy and the Western medical fraternity. She had, indeed, been ill for some time, but towards the close of that year the Chinese physicians gave up her case as hopeless. A British consular official, observing Li's manifest

depression, and learning the cause, at once suggested calling in a foreign doctor. Li could not make up his mind to this at once, but as Lady Li became worse during the night he sent off a messenger, who brought back Dr. Mackenzie, of the London Mission. Dr. Irwin was also called in. Miss Howard, M.D., was placed in attendance, a cure was effected, and Li appointed the latter lady special physician to his wife, and Doctors Mackenzie and Irwin to the rest of his family, and in gratitude established a Chinese Free Hospital, placing Dr. Mackenzie at the head of it. Several successful surgical operations were performed in the presence of the Viceroy; moreover, three of his secretaries put themselves under foreign treatment, as did the Prefect of Tientsin, a general, and the wife of the Customs Taotai. Numbers of opium smokers applied to be cured of their opium-longing, and it seemed at the time as if all barriers were being broken down and prejudices overcome.

The Hospital was at first started in a temple, but it was proposed to erect suitable buildings near the foreign settlement, as it would be impossible to properly attend to critical cases if they were kept two miles away in the Chinese city. The Viceroy himself gave the building, the outfit, and the running expenses of the General Hospital, and added his powerful influence and encouragement.

After residing as physician and guest for a month at the Viceroy's yamên, Miss Howard, M.D. (now Mrs. King), of the American M.E. Mission, completed her treatment of Lady Li, and departed on her return to Peking; taking with her lavish presents of silks and satins and valuable china, honoured also with the rare courtesy of having the Viceroy's despatch boat for a tug as far on the way to T'ung-chow as the water would allow. Before departure she was led to accept, for the winter, the pressing invitation to join in the dispensary work so generously established and fostered by the Viceroy—she to treat the women, while Dr. Mackenzie, of the London Mission, was to treat the men. Everyone concerned was full of high hopes; a Viceroy, possibly the greatest Viceroy in China, had engaged foreign physicians, considered that his wife's life had

been saved by them, was showing his gratitude after the liberal Chinese fashion, had had an American lady for two months in his official residence, and, with his wife, had shown her every courtesy. It is to missionaries that we are indebted for most of our written information about China, and for years to come Li Hung-chang was the special pet or hope of all missionary writers, especially as from year to year he continued to show his interest in the hospital.

A curious little story, indicating that Li was somewhat in awe of his wife, was told me by a man, who vouched for the accuracy of the facts. Some years after the foundation of an European Hospital Li visited a German man-of-war, and there, over the champagne, was persuaded that Koch's discoveries had revolutionised medicine, and that therefore he ought to have a German instead of an Englishman as Doctor of the Northern Fleet. In the end Li agreed to telegraph to Germany for a suitable man. Dr. Irwin, who had been attending the Li family, and also held the appointment of Physician to the Fleet, heard of this and went to Mr. Detring, then Commissioner of Customs at Tientsin. "Will you put the matter entirely into my hands? I will give you twenty-four hours to think it over. But if you want me to help you, you must be entirely guided by me." Dr. Irwin thought it over, and decided in the end to do so. "Very well, then. Sit down at once and write your resignation of both posts." Then Mr. Detring went to Li, and by degrees spoke a little loud. "Take care—take care," cried Li, in great alarm; then with a comical expression, "My wife might hear you. And I don't want her to know anything about it." Whether it was the mastery a weak, ailing woman often exercises over a good-natured husband, afraid of making her ill, or because she was herself clever and high-minded and considered that she owed her life to Dr. Irwin, Li in the end agreed to wire to Berlin that he did not want the doctor already bespoken by telegram. We may mention that there were again intrigues to get rid of Dr. Irwin when Li started on his voyage round the world; and Li was assured he could not possibly take an English doctor

into Russia or Germany; but he was not a man ever to part with a friend. Dr. Irwin accompanied him on his journey, and remained indeed in Li's employ till his own death, which occurred but a short while before the resolute, bluff "old squire" passed also from the world's stage, in which he had throughout his life occupied so large a space.

It was because, owing to his wife's illness, Li expected to have no son himself, that he adopted the present Lord Li, the son of his brother, who died young, as his eldest son. His wife did, in fact, after her recovery, bear him both a daughter and a son, who survived his father only a few months; but the position of the adopted son was not thereby affected—he still counted as the eldest.

Mr. King told me that his wife, for years afterwards (till Lady Li's death in 1902) on intimate relations with the family, always said that whatever Li might appear in official life, and although certainly a rather stern father, he shone in his domestic relations. And none who had ever once talked with him could doubt that he must have been a man pre-eminently pleasant at home and among his intimates; *bon camarade* and *bon enfant*, as the French would say.

The name of the "old squire" was bestowed upon Li by Mr. Murray. A brother of Li, who died young, left a blind son behind him, a very engaging lad, of whom Li appears to have been very fond, and who seems quite to have returned his affection. Shortly before the Peking siege, Mr. Murray, who had started a school for the blind in Peking, was asked to give this lad some lessons; which he did, gaining at the same time a very pleasant insight into Li's domestic relations; which he describes as singularly genial and amiable, brightening the picture by always talking of Li himself as "the old squire." After a while Mr. Murray found he could not spare time to go himself, but he sent one of his most promising pupils, under whose auspices Li's grandson made rather astonishing progress. But Li, although delighted with all this, never gave any contribution to the Blind School, nor affected even to remunerate Mr. Murray for his trouble, although some small—very small—sum was paid for his most

promising pupil's teaching. It was probably not Li's fault that this young man was among the first afterwards put to death by the Boxers. But Li might have paid handsomely for his grandson's tuition, and it seems astonishing that he should have allowed a member of his family, a much loved member, to derive so much benefit from a foreign charitable institution—one much needed in China, and in very struggling circumstances—without ever attempting to help it forward. I note this specially because Mr. Murray is one of those men so much more ready to give than to exact, that I had even trouble in getting the facts from him. He was eager to speak of Li as a much loved father of a family, tenderly indulgent towards the younger ones, quickly obeyed by his servants and those under him, genial towards himself, evidently an ideal Chinese "old squire"; but he shrank from in any way indicating that he himself, or the charity to which he had dedicated his life, might have had claims upon Li that had not been met. "I never asked him," he repeated again and again.

Liberality was, to put it plainly, very much lacking in Li. Years after the foundation of the hospital, of which we have spoken above, when Dr. Mackenzie died, worn out by his self-denying labours for starving Chinese, to the surprise of the missionary body the Viceroy suddenly claimed the building as his own. A very angry quarrel ensued, which the British Consul decided in favour of Li. He is since said to have regretted that he did so, and it certainly does not seem that Li was justified. From this time forward we must expect to find most of the foreign accounts of Li somewhat unfavourably coloured, as before they were perhaps too rosy in their colouring. And it seems thus to have come out that Li never did give any of his own money as a thank-offering for his wife's recovery, but public money, that he appropriated for this purpose.

There are many other stories corroborating the charge of stinginess against Li, whose avarice has yet been more commonly talked of. In reality, probably Li looked upon money as a means of gaining power, and was always

unwilling to part with it to no purpose. By means of a judicious application of money it was always easy to win to higher place, by means of higher place to get more money, and so onwards and ever upwards as far as this world is concerned.

When I had my one interview with Li at Canton in the spring of 1900, I noticed another trait in his character. I had asked for the interview, on behalf of the Anti-foot-binding movement; and although he did not subscribe, he very good-naturedly rose (with considerable difficulty), and wrote an inscription on my fan, at my suggestion, by way of signifying approval. But he also at once promised a contribution to the Hospital of an American lady doctor, who kindly accompanied me; looking carefully in her book to see what previous Viceroys had given, that he might act according to precedent, and then insisting that she must wait and take the money away with her. At the time I thought this a little inconvenient, as the interview was really over, and we were not only kept waiting ourselves, which did not matter, but seemed to be unduly detaining the Viceroy and his suite. But Li, discharging all expression from his face, which always in a Chinese signifies there is a hidden, deeper meaning, said, "No, take it away with you. Wait and take it away. It will be here directly. It won't take long." Evidently he knew that this was the only way to ensure the hospital getting the exact amount of the subscription, and had a kindly desire that it should do so—also, no doubt, that there might be no risk of complications and troubles arising. So my friend went off with her hundred dollars, which she then laughingly said she must hold on to now, as the Viceroy had insisted on her taking it.

It was at all events a kindly, sensible act on the part of a man, of whom it is interesting to remember that we know of no unkindly acts.

Of the nature of Li's manners at an early period, some idea can be formed from the account given by one of our greatest authorities upon things Chinese, if not the greatest, then in a subordinate position in the British Consulate. Sent to

interview the Viceroy on some matter, he found no one to receive him, no one to do anything, an absolutely empty audience-hall; so he sat down coolly in a seat down the side of the room, somewhere near the door, and very far away from the upper seats at the other end of the room, where Li might sometime or other be expected to appear. Eventually he did so, with much noise and a great following; and, without any apology for keeping his visitor waiting or request to him to come up higher, began shouting out to him in the difficult Anhui dialect, which was continually the despair of his Tientsin attendants, who knew they had to do something and at once, but could not the least make out what. Then, to the utter dumbfounding of every one present, contrary to all principles of Chinese etiquette, with which even then he was intimately acquainted, Mr. Giles shouted back his answer in the same loud, rough voice, as far as he could imitate it, in which Li had spoken to him. The astonishment and horror of everyone present can better be imagined than described. Even Li started and spoke lower. Gradually the conversation assumed a somewhat more conventional tone; and the preliminaries having now been got through as to "How long have you been in China?" etc., presently Li, with a humorous smile, beckoned the bold young representative of England to come up higher and sit down beside him. They soon became excellent friends. Every story about Li at this period deals with his rudeness at the outset, though many dwell more upon his subsequent geniality.

Li, in fact, was always famous for brusque, not to say rude, speeches. In 1892, when receiving a visit from an American officer, he asked him abruptly, "How would your Government like it if I borrowed the English fleet and bombarded Washington?" This seems to have been rather a favourite idea of his, for on an occasion of great state at Chefoo, he said to an English naval officer of high standing, "Would it not be nice if we joined together, and went and smashed Vladivostock?" To two American College young men, who made a wonderful journey through Asia to Peking on bicycles, Li was much more polite, saying "A scholar should be

courteous to scholars." When he asked, "Which country of those you have seen do you think the best?" like patriotic Americans, they told him that the United States seemed to them nearest perfection. "Then why do you come to see other countries?", asked Li. "Because," they answered, "if we had not seen other countries, we should not have known ours was the best." Li was politeness itself to these young men, carefully inquiring as to the behaviour of the officials along the route towards them. Possibly it was the Chinese contempt for Naval and Military officers that made him so rude in the other instance; or perhaps his exceptional courtesy to the young Americans was due to his surprise at what must have seemed to him their unique rudeness; for it is Chinese etiquette always to talk of "my miserable country," "your grand nation," "my wretched hovel," "your beautiful palace," and so on.

This characteristic never left him. When he was in England an American lady newspaper writer tells how he immediately asked her her age, what she made her living by, and how much she got for her writings. I forget precisely in what pleasant form of words she explained that she took off from her years whilst she added on to her emoluments. Next day an English lady newspaper writer, in answer to the same questions, replied truly. "Oh, you must be a very poor sort of writer," said Li directly. "There was a little girl here yesterday, much younger than you, who made much more." That the interpreter should have interpreted this speech perhaps illustrates the esteem in which both held newspaper ladies! Once, when Li Hung-chang complained that Sir Harry Parkes was like all other foreigners—he could not talk reasonably—the then British Consul, Davenport, spoke up and reproved him by bluntly remarking, "That is all very well, but your idea of Tao-li (reason) is to look at your own side of the question and ignore ours: talking to you is like addressing a row of books." Besides this character for rudeness where he could venture upon it, Li Hung-chang's reputation for always getting the best of it in conversation accompanied him through life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INTRIGUES AND TROUBLES (1891—1894).

DURING 1891 an intrigue was set on foot which, after lasting for several months, seems to have come to nothing; an intrigue in which Li Hung-chang, Lord Li, and Mr. Lo Feng-luh combined in an attempt to remove Sir Robert Hart and put Lord Li in his place as Inspector-General of Customs, removing at the same time half a dozen other prominent Commissioners and putting Chinese adherents of the Lis in their places. There is said to be extant a copy of a memorial addressed to Li Hung-chang on the subject, to be forwarded by the Viceroy to the Throne. What the real relations were between Li and Sir Robert Hart would be very interesting to know. Probably Li regarded him like Gordon and Burlingame, as likely to become dangerous. But he must certainly also have thought that the Customs revenues would furnish excellent pickings, if handled by a Chinese who knew the way to make profit out of them. Sir Robert Hart says of Li: "My own opinion is that luck and circumstance were as much on his side as brains; but then it requires brains to catch luck and circumstance."

In 1892 Li was sending help to the people in Northern Anhui, where the last harvest had failed, and consequently much distress was prevalent. As the provinces of Kiangsu and Anhui had on former occasions come forward in a spirited manner to render assistance when parts of Chihli were inundated, the Viceroy felt bound to do what he could in return; and he accordingly sent 50,000 taels from the funds in the hands of the Board of Relief. The Governor of Anhui wrote

to beg for more. Li, however, remarked that the Charity Fund in Chihli was not a large one, and there was an immediate call on it for the unfortunate people "who have suffered so seriously at the hands of the insurgents in the neighbourhood of Jehol." "Therefore," said Li, "Chihli is really not rich enough to help other provinces; but the distress in Anhui being so severe," he ordered the payment of another twenty thousand taels to meet the most pressing needs.

Besides all the other famines, news was now brought of a terrible famine in Shansi. There is always something on a very large scale going on somewhere in China, and an official appointed by the Viceroy Li started from Peking with 100,000 taels, to be distributed in the famine-stricken districts of Shansi. At the same time, a Censor memorialised that a magistrate in Shansi should be cashiered for appropriating large sums of money that had been given him for the people of his district. It was to help the sufferers from this famine that such large sums were sent from London.

We next find Li addressing the Emperor on behalf of the Provincial Commander-in-Chief and other officers, all belonging to the "Army of the Huai," the title given to the Anhui troops which had been raised to fight against the Taipings; representing that the Huai army had had a most distinguished career, in early days fighting numberless battles against the Taiping and Nienfei rebels, and since then keeping guard upon the coast. "At Wusih, near Soochow, at Paoting Fu, and at Wuchang, all places where it has done good service, temples have been built and services periodically performed in honour of those who died in action or from exhaustion or disease; but nothing of the sort exists at Luchou Fu, where the force was first raised." He tells how in the beginning of the reign of Hsien Feng, when the Taipings invaded Northern Anhui and effected a partial union with the Nienfei, Luchou became a point of the utmost strategic importance. The Viceroy's father, a Senior Secretary of the Board of Punishments, and the Viceroy himself, were then ordered to return home to Luchou and enlist a local force for the defence of the district. A number of since distinguished officials aided them

by enrolling bands; and the valour displayed by these troops struck terror into the Taipings. In the first year of Tung Chih (1862), having been made Governor of Kiangsu, he had been ordered to march towards the east, when he was accompanied by the above-mentioned officers and their men, and was afterwards joined by Liu Ping-chang and Wu Ch'ang-ch'ing, who had collected similar troops in the adjacent districts. Thus had been formed the Army of the Huai, by which Kianhsu was reconquered and both the Nienfei armies were destroyed. From first to last the prowess of these troops was seen in Che-kiang, Fukien, Kiangsu, Anhui, Hupeh, Honan, Chihli, and Shantung. "Many honours have been granted to those who fell, and chapels have been erected to their memory. In Hunan, Tsêng Kwo-fan built a temple in honour of the troops of that province, and when the war was ended obtained permission for the performance of official services. It is hoped that a similar favour may be granted for the Army of the Huai, which, though but few of its veterans are left, still remains a valuable force, guarding the approach to the Throne and defending the coast as far as Foochow and Canton."

At the same time, he recommended for reward a number of officers who had taken part in the late campaign against the rebels in the north. In a country traversed by a network of mountain roads, and constantly haunted by mounted brigands and other freebooters, no one can say how widely the danger would have spread had it not been nipped in the bud. "In the intense cold of the winter, outside the passes, our men suffered terribly from the frost; but this deterred them no more than did the showers of bullets from the guns of the enemy. In the more hard-fought battles the carnage was very great, as is proved by the reports of the officers engaged in restoring order, who state that they have buried twenty thousand corpses."

It is touching to read of the veteran statesman's recollections of his own earlier martial services, and his mention of his father will also be noticed.

Hardly was the ink of this memorial dry before Li had to

turn his attention from the far north to the far west, and, "moved by a sentiment of equity, knowing the miseries suffered by the Christians of Szechuan, who had been the objects of an outbreak, sent personal orders to the Chungking mandarins, enjoining on them to render to the Christians the justice to which they had a right. The murderers of the Christians were to be punished according to the law; the Christians were to be reinstated in their homes, and indemnified for the heavy losses they had undergone.

No one could object to these conditions, dictated by the first principles of justice; they would be granted by the meanest person who found himself in the same circumstances. The Mission of Western Szechuan accepted them; it had never demanded anything more than common justice. It was thus that the Bishop was able to come to an understanding with the mandarins, and by common accord an arrangement was signed comprising the following clauses:—

1. Punishment of the six murderers of Christians.
2. Payment of an indemnity to the Christians.
3. Reinstatement of the Christians in their properties.

But alas! in spite of all these words, no penalty overtook the malefactors in far-away Szechuan. Liu Ping-chang, the Viceroy, simply asked to be allowed to resign his post on the ground of ill-health, and was given a month's leave of absence, which was again extended to three months.

Obviously Li was bent on shielding rather than punishing his special friend, the Viceroy of Szechuan, who, with Sheng, made, up to that date, the great Li triumvirate.

In striking contrast was the fate of a militiaman named Chou, not a Christian, who had been detailed by the authorities to guard a Roman Catholic church a week before the massacre of the twelve Christians and the burning of more than 260 houses at Tatsou. This man had been brought in March last before the sub-prefect, and asked if he was the Chou *who had been engaged by Father Pons to kill people.* The poor man replied that he did not know Father Pons even by sight, and had never killed anybody. Racked, tortured, and beaten until his legs were broken, he stuck to

the truth: "I was ordered and paid by the head of the militia to protect the church: I don't know the missionary you mention, and I have never killed anyone." Two days later, he was again brought before the sub-prefect, and again tortured; with a truly noble courage he still refused to give the false evidence which the magistrate was anxious to elicit, and he died under the torturer's hands rather than earn his release by perjury. A heathen if you will, but certainly also a typical Chinese, yet worthy of the finest days of the Spartans, to whom so many are yet to be found like-minded amongst this great Chinese people, who seem at once so loyal and faithful, so cruel and remorseless.

As if, however, all this were not enough, the Pamirs question was engrossing much of Li's attention. There was an active demand on all sides at Peking for exact information as to the geography and topography of Central Asia, and especially of the so-called "Roof of the World"; which eventually resulted in a Commission being appointed to determine the boundaries between the three Empires—Great Britain, Russia, and China. Also the Chinese Minister at Berlin was ordered to send his Chief Secretary of Legation to St. Petersburg to act as Chargé d'Affaires there, in order to have a representative on the spot to talk over the Pamirs question with the Russian authorities.

It was about this period of his career that Li was entertained at dinner at Tientsin by the agent of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in the newly erected premises of the Bank. There were present on this occasion: Lord Li, Ambassador to Japan, Li's own son, and his grandson. In attendance were the officials forming the Viceroy's suite, among them Lo Feng-luh, Secretary to the Admiralty, who, when Li's health was enthusiastically drunk, read for him one of the admirably composed speeches which won so much credit in the subsequent European tour. A brief quotation from it is of interest.

"The theory of political economy which treats of the circulation of wealth, or the banking system, the pivot on which the international commerce of the civilised nations

turns, though a modern science in Europe, has been originated, we presume, from the principles of the law of administration of the Chow dynasty. The subsequent writings of the two most celebrated Chinese historians, Tze Ma-chien and Panku, on the Balance of Trade and Commodities, may be compared with those of Adam Smith in the 'Wealth of Nations.' In addition to my various official duties, as Superintendent of Trade in North China, I take a great interest in studying the state of commerce between our country and foreign nations, and, as the banks are a sort of self-registering barometer of the trade, they cannot fail to attract my attention."

The telegraph lines were now being completed across far-distant Yunnan in the south-west by Li Hung-chang's orders. He had barely finished his inquiries into the disturbances in Jehol in the north, and we now find him commanding his naval secretary, Mr. Lo Feng-luh, to be the next Customs Taotai of Tientsin, and Mr. Wu T'ing-fáng—known in Hong-kong as Ny-Choy, barrister-at-law—to be Director-General of North China railways in place of the then Director, just retired on account of a stroke of paralysis. These two men, Lo Feng-luh and Wu T'ing-fang, since respectively promoted to be Chinese Ministers in London and Washington, did yeoman service for their Government later on during the Boxer troubles, explaining away everything that could be explained, and always maintaining that there had not been a general massacre of all the Corps Diplomatique in Peking. The strangely passive position assumed by the United States in view of the cruel outrages upon American women and children may in great measure be attributed to Mr. Wu T'ing-fang's persuasive tongue. Both these men owe their advancement in the first instance to Li Hung-chang, and have done him credit.

Tennyson's "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay" strikes an answering chord in all our hearts; but probably few people know that a Chinese cycle is actually sixty years. Still less, no doubt, have they any idea how important a sixtieth birthday is in China, and already in the spring of 1893, among all the famines and troubles

of the people, preparations were well advanced for the Dowager Empress's birthday in the following year.

Possibly in recognition of these, in June, we find the Empress Dowager graciously presenting the members of the Grand Council, and H.E. Li in particular, each with a folding and a moon-shaped silk fan, on both of which were autograph water-colour paintings by the illustrious donor. On the folding fan which was presented to Li was painted a bunch of grapes, on the moon-shaped silk fan a pink peony—by the Chinese considered the most beautiful of flowers. The writing on the other side of the fans—prose or poetry—and the names of the receivers were by the Palace librarians, members of the Hanlin College.

Yet, in spite of this delightful reward from Tze Hsi's hands, when we think of the multifarious occupations of a Chinese Viceroy, and how he must himself feel the impossibility of sufficing for all, and the almost impossibility of getting clean-handed through them, we can sympathise with Chan Tai in his poem:—

THE WHITE SWALLOW.

From the Chinese of Chan Tai.

Few are the hearts that the lusts of the day
Leave white at the set of the sun;
To the blossoming pear-tree I hie me away,
Nor care, be the world lost or won.

Pallid my plumes as I skim through the air,
I would scorn to be tinged like the crow;
And my outline, if fuller when homeward I fare,
Must be moulded of nothing but snow.

My shadow gleams white on the sable of night;
Tho' steeped in the bloom of the peach,
The purple of springtime I've worn in my flight,
My mantle I never need bleach.

Ah! many are winging the radiant doves
To flutter in evil apart;
Through the tempest of jealousies, sunshine of loves,
I alone bring an innocent heart.*

* Translated by Kolichi.

Li's summary methods of dealing with the superstitions of his country when he wanted to drive a railway along showed him at his best. We see in the following incident the energy that was evident in his very attitude when he was young, as it was shown also by the much talked of brilliance of his eyes. We see also the strong common-sense and a little of the laughter-loving geniality that must have carried him over many a rough place in his career. The railway engineers wished to fix upon a place a mile outside the city of Moukden as the junction for the Kirin and Newchwang Railway, but the Tartar General Yu-lu got a number of geomancers and similar wiseacres to see whether this choice would affect the Fung-shui of Moukden. Fung-Shui (literally wind-water) or the belief in influences of climate and exposure, is one of the religions of China; and the wise men declared that "the vertebræ of the Dragon which encircles the holy city of Moukden would be broken by driving the long iron nails of the railway sleepers into them"; so Yu-lu vetoed the decision of the engineers, who accordingly reported the matter to Li.

Now inasmuch as Kinchow, Moukden and Newchwang form the three angles of a right-angled triangle, with Moukden as the apex and Kinchow and Newchwang at the base angles, the ingenious Tartar General tried to get over the difficulty that had been raised by his veto by ordering that the line should be led straight across from Kinchow to Newchwang. Obviously, this route had shortness of distance to recommend it; but the engineers objected to it on two grounds: first, that the country between Newchwang and Kinchow was a low, marshy tract of land liable to floods during the wet seasons and secondly, that the country being sparsely settled, scarcely any traffic would be tapped. They therefore preferred to make a longer line by joining Kinchow to Moukden, and from that city running branch lines southwards to Newchwang and north-eastwards to Kirin, more than compensating for the length of the line by making it pass through thickly settled and rich towns on the route and laying it on ground comparatively level and high. Upon the report of the engineers reaching the Viceroy, he wrote at once to the superstitious

Tartar General, telling him that his anxiety for the Fung-shui of the ancestral home of the reigning dynasty was exceedingly commendable, though it was his (the Viceroy's) candid opinion that the Fung-shui of Moukden would be bettered by the junction rather than otherwise. Still, if his colleague (Yu-lu) was determined to veto the engineers decision he would memorialise the Throne, and in the meantime had ordered all work to be stopped on the line, pending his Majesty's decision. Alarmed at this sudden turn of affairs, Yu-lu wrote and urged that the work should go on, but that the engineers should go over the ground again, and he would "think about it." A place a few hundred yards distant from the objectionable first site was then chosen, and the geomancers, apparently acting upon the hint not to make any more objections, declared that the Dragon's pulse would not be injured in the newly chosen spot.

Li had a habit of always going straight to the point. Mr. Goebel, an engineer and also a late Belgian Consul-General in Shanghai, when at one time asked his opinion upon the desirability of establishing laboratories in Belgium for instruction in practical engineering, wrote :—

"Allow me to add to my personal estimate the opinion which I had the opportunity of gathering two years ago from the mouth of the illustrious Viceroy, Li Hung-chang, the eminent Chinese statesman.

"As I was dilating to him on the depth of our technical studies and the merits of our engineers, he said to me: "Belgian engineers have the knowledge—but have they also the practical experience? For *in these matters science is worth little unless it is made fruitful by practice.* I pointed out to him the greatness and variety of the Belgian industry and the immense field of action open to our young engineers, in which they can acquire practical knowledge when they have done with the theory. 'Do not bring me,' he said, 'any man less than thirty years old.'"

An English Commissioner of Customs, who had had many dealings with Li, pronounced him an excellent administrator and strong and daring up to a certain point. Li would sit

down and write off a forcible despatch himself, and see that his orders were attended to. If Li had remained in Chihli, in this gentleman's opinion there would have been no Boxer outbreak. Once, when he was passing through Tientsin, Li consulted him about sending a large quantity of treasure south. Going into the matter of the expense of conveying and protecting it, he advised sending a gunboat with it. Li agreed. Then the other said: "And I think I will go on that gunboat too, if you permit." Li rather opened his eyes: "Oh! you will go on that gunboat!" To the intense surprise of the Englishman, the captain of the gunboat reported all ready for starting within twenty-four hours, and he went to Li and complimented him upon the smartness with which the preparations had been carried out. Li said calmly: "Oh, when I give orders that things are to be done, they have to be done at once." "And whom are you going to send in charge of this treasure?" "Why, of course, you will take charge of it." "What! I? Had you not better send one of your own people?" "Why should I?" grumbled Li, with his comical expression. "You said you were going, and he would only steal it."

If this was his opinion of Chinese, he seems to have had a still worse opinion of Manchus. When the new Minister to the United States, Spain, and Peru, called upon Li to take leave, and told the latter that he had eight Manchu *attachés* in his suite, Li made a grimace at the information, and immediately said: "Well, take my sincere advice, never put the Manchus in any post of responsibility, for they are never to be trusted"; which recalls a little Trochu's words as he walked round the wards of a Paris hospital, when on asking a wounded soldier what part of France he came from, and being told Paris, "*Mauvaise race, mauvais sang*," said the General, turning upon his heel.

About 1893 Li was busy with the new medical college. The work of Drs. Mackenzie, Irwin, and Mrs. King begun in 1889, had been brought to a successful conclusion, and the Medical College stood ready to do its work. "In this country, where so much depends on the individuality of

a statesman, an institution of this kind may be almost regarded as the work of the man who favours its birth, and we hope that the college will be a lasting memorial worthy of the talents of Li Hung-chang," wrote a Tientsin correspondent in 1894.

At the expense of some £5,000, a large medical school had been erected adjoining the hospital and fully equipped. Twenty-three students—English speaking—had been enlisted, chiefly in Shanghai and Ningpo, and were to be maintained—*i.e.* lodged, boarded, *and paid*—during the entire period of their curriculum. One of the very last acts of the late Sir Andrew Clark was to appoint a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, to the position of Director of Studies and Resident Surgeon and Physician. The students were to be put through a preliminary course of chemistry and to begin anatomy with French models in wax.

Before this Li Hung-chang had deputed a doctor attached to the Peiyang hospital at Tientsin, to go down to Shanghai and get together twenty young men, under the age of twenty, for the purpose of training them for the medical profession, preparatory to entering the Chinese Army or Navy as doctors or surgeons. Ten of these young disciples were required to have had at least three years' study of the English language. Mr. Fenney, of the Anglo-Chinese school, also won his patronage, the first practical manifestation by a high Chinese official of interest in any school wholly under foreign control, and having no connection whatever with the Chinese Government and officials. The Viceroy offered two watches as prizes for an essay in English and for proficiency in mathematics, appointing his secretary, Mr. Lo Feng-luh, to select the subject of the essay and conduct the examination, and proposing to continue to offer prizes to the school in succeeding years.

We find the completely Chinese Li again, however, in a memorial to the Throne, March 16th, 1894, stating that the second breach in the banks of the Grand Canal at Hungmiao (about fourteen miles from Tientsin) the other day, was owing to the devilry of a river god who had concealed himself in

the vicinity of that place. His presence was at first reported by the local rustics, and eventually corroborated by the testimony of all the officers and troops occupied with the task of filling in the breaches there, who averred that the god appeared in various guises to them while at work. This report reaching the Commander-in-Chief and the Taotais in charge on the day of the second successful attempt to fill in the breach, a sacrificial stage was erected in honour of the deity, and offerings were made to him, beseeching his kind interposition on behalf of the embankments, coupled with prayers that he would remain passive and not spoil the work completed with such labour and expense.

In answer to the prayers of the said Commander-in-Chief and Taotais, it is presumed that the river god promised favour, for on the day in question the workers were blessed with beautiful serene weather and peaceful calm upon the waters, which, it must be confessed, was just the contrary before the sacrifices were offered, the labourers at the canal having been hitherto impeded in their work by sleet and pouring rain, while the canal itself was one mass of raging waters. Memorialist, therefore, thinks that a fitting recognition should be made by the Throne to this river god for his interposition on behalf of the unimpeded traffic on this canal and rest and quiet to the people living in the vicinity. His Majesty is therefore requested to bestow a title on the river god of the northern terminus of the Grand Canal, and to allow a temple to be built for him there, and entered on the official list for spring and autumn sacrifices by the mandarins of the locality.

It was in 1894 that the story was told of the Empress Dowager and her eighteen lamps, which she was said to keep constantly burning day and night in her Palace to represent the eighteen provinces of China. One of the lamps, though it received precisely the same attention as all the others, took to burning very badly, and the Empress sent for the chief Imperial astronomer to learn the reason. The latter, having carefully considered the matter and consulted the archives, told the Empress that the lamp which was burning so badly

represented the province of Canton, which was about to be afflicted with a serious epidemic in which the God of Pestilence had determined to take off eight-tenths of the people.

The Empress was very much concerned at being told this, and on her asking how such a dreadful doom might be averted, the chief astronomer said that the god might perhaps be moved with prayer and offerings. Everything was done to appease his wrath by the Empress Dowager's orders; whereupon the chief astronomer, being asked what success had been achieved, after much consideration and consultation replied that the God of Pestilence had consented to compromise—but this was absolutely the best that he could do—for four-tenths human beings and the balance in rats.

Thus the frightful mortality of rats and human beings at Canton that spring was accounted for.

Among his many other investments, Li had started a cotton cloth mill in Shanghai, and tried hard to get a monopoly of the business. No less than nine telegrams were, therefore, despatched to him by the mill officials and the various local mandarins when these mills were burnt to the ground. Among Li's answers, the first was of an hortatory nature, owing to his having been informed of the attempted suicide of the mill manager in the flames; the second asked why it was that the manager had not insured the property; the third inquired why the foreign volunteer fire brigades had not rendered any assistance, and commanded the manager to try his best to find out the origin of the fire and see whether anyone was in fault; the fourth and last commanded Nieh Taotai to investigate the matter and report at once. He deputed his eldest son to help in the re-organisation.

A native correspondent at Tientsin writes that Li was exceedingly annoyed in 1894 by the efforts of the Brazilian emigration agents to get Chinese labourers to go to Brazil, before the ratification of a treaty between China and that country, the uncertainty of the revolution there in progress at that time being another reason why he was unwilling that his countrymen should visit it. He suggested that if the

Chinese in the South wished to leave their native places, they should migrate to the north-eastern provinces of Manchuria and to Heilungchiang and Chinese Turkestan, where there was plenty of room in a fruitful country, instead of emigrating to foreign lands.

The same Commissioner of Customs whom I have quoted before tells a story rather bearing upon this about Liu K'un-yi: a man whom, like all Englishmen who have had dealings with him, he considers quite to be relied upon in spite of the vices that so disfigure an otherwise apparently noble character, worthy of the manly province of Hunan from which he came. The Spanish were at one time making great efforts to re-establish the export of Chinese labourers from Canton to Cuba. "Do you know what you have virtually agreed to?" asked the Englishman, astonished at the Chinese Viceroy. "Oh," replied Liu K'un-yi, "the Spanish minister came and talked for five hours, and I was so tired I could think of nothing better to do than to tell him to talk it all over with you and settle matters. Of course, what you say he wants is out of the question. Why, it would be enough to cause a revolution." The same Englishman relates how Sir Robert Hart, who writes Chinese very well, and is given to the production of somewhat lengthy despatches, once evolved a particularly long one on the reform of China. Asking Li if he had read it, Li replied: "Read it! N-o-o! Wen Hsiang will have to read it, and I expect it will kill him."

In the Spring Liu K'un-yi had recommended Ching-ts'u, a son of Li Han-chang, as a man fitted by his great knowledge of foreign affairs and government to be a Taotai of first importance, and requested that the Throne should give him a post at the first opportunity. This the Emperor did, making him Salt Commissioner at Hupeh. The latter accordingly went up for the usual audience, but, it seems, failed to satisfy the Emperor of his "great knowledge of foreign affairs." This coupled with a memorial by a Censor informing the Emperor of Li Ching-ts'u's relationship to Li Han-chang and Li Hung-chang, made the Emperor suspect that family influence had more to do with the recommendation than the talents of the

nominee; so, after remarking that although Liu K'un-yi had always had the reputation of being impartial in his duties, he had now failed to act up to the mark, the appointment of Li Ching-ts'u to the Salt Commissionership was cancelled. In the same decree, a similar fate befell a man of Taotai's rank, recommended by Li Han-chang; on the ground that the nominee had been Li's secretary, and so "favouritism must have been at the bottom of all this laudatory language." Viceroys and Governors are exhorted to be more careful of criticism in the future. Thus, both Liu K'un-yi and Li Han-chang "lost face" this time, and of course indirectly, Li Hung-chang, whose nephew the rejected Li Ching-ts'u was.

Chang Chih-tung, on the other hand, had meanwhile very successfully inaugurated his iron works at Hanyang close to Hankow. It was expected that they would soon be turning out large quantities of steel; meanwhile, as we learn from a native informant, the Viceroy gave great praise to Ts'ai Taotai, the Director-General of the Iron Works and Coal and Metal Mines of Hupeh, as well as to the various foreigners connected with the works, to whom the greater part of the credit was really due. Thus the different Viceroys pursued their different courses, Liu K'un-yi evidently coquetting with the Li faction, Li Han-chang as usual trying to get all he could, Chang Chih-tung working on at his somewhat visionary schemes, yet achieving practical result, Li busy with foreign politics, and as it would seem with every other sort of affair under Heaven.

A little later he started for his triennial inspection of the coast naval defences, his colleague being the Governor of Manchuria. The novelty of the occasion was the landing at Shanhaikuan and the journey home by railway. Li then at last saw with his own eyes the great bridge over the Lanho, in the progress of which he had manifested and sustained so keen an interest. Unfortunately, he could no longer see the most remarkable part of the work, the caisson foundation sixty feet below the bed of the river.

The Viceroy also spent three hours on board H.M.S. *Centurion*, examining carefully her armament and equipment,

in which he expressed much interest, the more so because we now hear he had been informed that the English were now incapable of building ships or making cannon.

Li was still gaining honours, but in 1893 he sent a secret memorial to the Throne, pointing out that he was getting too old for the onerous duties connected with his position, as Viceroy of Chihli and virtually Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, asking that he might be permitted to retire, and even recommending his successor; but the Emperor refused to entertain any idea of this, and would not hear of his retirement. [For Emperor, of course, read Empress.]

In March, 1894, the Viceroy Li was again made the recipient of Imperial favour, the three-eyed peacock feather being bestowed upon him. This, the highest honour obtainable in China, had last been bestowed upon a Manchu, and that was about 300 years ago. Li Hung-chang is, indeed, the only Chinese who ever received this mark of favour. Thus it would appear that he had attained to the rank next below that of the Emperor himself among the titled dignitaries of the Empire. However, before the year was out he had been deprived of all his honours and titles by an order from the Council Chamber "to bring him to a better state of mind" as was therein stated.

Before that an extra title was arranged for the Empress Dowager in honour of H.I.M.'s sixtieth birthday anniversary, the extra two characters "Chu'ng-hsi" being ordered by Edict to be presented to the Imperial lady on the eighth moon of the next Chinese year (September, 1894). Tze Hsi had already seven names of fourteen characters, which ministers at Court had to labour through whenever mentioning her; but from the following September they would have to go painfully through the long list of Tze-hsi-Tuan-yu-K'ang-i-Chao-yu-Chung-ch'eng-Shou-kung-Ch'ing-hsien-Ch'ung-hsi-Huang T'ai-hou (the last three meaning Dowager Empress), before anyone could be sure of whom they were talking.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JAPANESE WAR (1894—1895).

In 1894 Krupp's agent was in China, and Armstrong's also, both scenting a coming war. Possibly contracts are not managed quite in the same way for our War Office as in China, so it may be as well to explain the method there in force. No man can hope to sell to a Chinese Viceroy unless at a much higher rate than the goods are worth, since he is always expected to sign a receipt for some thousands of taels more than he has received. The difference between the price received and that signed for goes into the Viceroy's purse (with the exception of what intermediaries pocket on the way thither), and this is the really important factor round which all the preliminary negotiations circle, the quality of the goods being a quite unimportant item in comparison. It is for this reason that men of a certain character are generally most successful in dealing with Chinese officials and that transactions are lengthy and precarious.

Two men have told me of a certain deal in guns, which at last was settled to the great satisfaction of the foreigner who put it through. He came into the Tientsin Club and had a champagne lunch on the strength of it. That deal was with Li Hung-chang, and, my informants maintain, decided the Japanese war. How much money was made by it is known of necessity to many living now. How many men have died in consequence, how many homes have been ravaged, how many women murdered, how many children left orphans or cut up by swords or thrown down wells or into rivers, none will ever know. How that foreigner came into the club and

ordered his champagne, sticks in the minds of men who were present. And after that the Japanese war was a dead certainty they say. After that also there were large contracts for guns which were never delivered, never even put in order, though the money passed, as all Tientsin knows. And the poor soldiers went without.

By July the local mandarins were receiving urgent messages from the north to send at once 100,000 pounds of prismatic powder, presumably for the fleet, with orders to forward it within three days from receipt of telegram. Similar orders had been received from Formosa; the Governor, H.E. Shao Yu-lien, offering cash down for a large quantity of arms to be sent south at once. The arsenal authorities were at their wits' end how to fulfil these orders. From 10,000 to 12,000 Chinese troops were ordered to Korea. To transport them a number of China merchants' steamers had been sent forth, the *Kowshing* had been chartered, and endeavours had been made to secure other British steamers.

The cause was an insurrection in Korea. According to Mr. Michie: "A condominium must ever be destructive to the policy of the less energetic member, and the treaty concluded between Li Hung-chang and Count Ito in 1885 was the fatal prelude to the events of ten years later. As the treaties granting to Russia a co-equal right of navigating the Amur and a joint ownership of the Assuri Province constituted the virtual surrender of Chinese rights, so any treaty with Japan, no matter on what conditions, respecting Korea, was a virtual abdication of the Chinese suzerainty. The right in common to send troops into Korea on notice given could have no other effect than to deliver up the Kingdom to the Power which was the most alert in taking advantage of the agreement." As it fell out, the King of Korea under pressure had appealed to his suzerain, the Emperor of China, to send troops to help him. Li Hung-chang was unwilling to do this, but the Tsungli Yamên taunted him with never being ready, and insisted. Then the insurrection collapsed, the Chinese troops were ordered to withdraw, and the *Kowshing* is said to have been chartered at first for the purpose of bringing them away.

Now the Japanese had already sent many more troops than the Chinese to Korea; moreover, a gentleman, who should be in a position to know, told me he had himself seen the whole Japanese plan of the coming war drawn up beforehand, down to the very smallest detail, together with the terms of peace Japan intended to demand; also the exact plan of the next war she then expected to have to wage with another foreign Power. Possibly the events that have since occurred have thrown even the wily Japanese out in their reckoning, and led to some revision of all this; but if such papers were, as I have been assured, already drawn up before the Chino-Japanese war of 1894, then it is obvious that the Japanese knew perfectly not only how to plan but how to mislead; for the great authorities unanimously declared there would be no fighting; the very war correspondents who had flocked to Korea dispersed, and the *Kowshing*, Jardine's steamer, embarked 1,500 Chinese troops, together with General von Hanneken in command.

The oft-told story of the *Kowshing* always reminds me of Browning's "Ring and the Book," where every character concerned imparts so different a colouring to the same circumstances as to make them appear quite different. But I, who must not emulate the poet by devoting a whole volume to this one episode, will be content to quote a letter signed "Mariner" in the North China *Herald*, which bears internal evidence of the intention of the writer to tell the truth. It is dated July 30th.

On arrival at Tangku the *Kowshing* received orders to turn round to take in coal and troops. To inquiries made by the captain and crew whether the war had been declared, they were told that it had not, that things were in the same condition as when they left Shanghai. Relying on this information as correct, they left Tangku with 1,500 troops, some cannon, and munitions of war, with sealed orders that they were not to open till they got a certain distance to sea.

Everything proceeded favourably until their arrival at Baker Island, at the entrance to Shallow Bay, where they met a Japanese man-of-war, awaiting them, already cleared for action, and evidently

expecting them. On arriving within range of the man-of-war's guns, they were ordered to anchor, and were boarded by an officer, and told that war had been declared between China and Japan, and that they were carrying an illegal cargo, but that the ship and crew being British (a neutral Power), they, the Japanese, would not touch them. They requested the captain, officers, and crew to go on board the man-of-war, promising that they should be landed at the nearest port, but declaring their intention to blow up the ship and destroy every other soul on board, amongst whom was a foreigner in Chinese clothes with the rank of General. And let it be accounted to their everlasting honour as British men, that they refused as one man to leave their fellow-passengers and ship in the hour of danger.

The naval officer repeated the offer, which was again refused; he then returned on board his ship, which steamed a little way off, fired a torpedo into her and blew the stern off, and then another that blew her up. In a few seconds the water was one mass of struggling humanity, fighting for dear life and vainly looking for assistance in any shape—even a British man-of-war.

The Japanese man-of-war turned on its heel, and, slowly steaming through the midst of the struggling mass, opened fire on it with the machine guns and small arms, until hardly a soul remained alive. To say that they had no intentions against foreigners is palpably wrong, as one foreigner was able to get to the mast of the sunken ship and climbed up it, when the Japanese returned and deliberately shot him down, having to fire several times before they hit him, leaving several Chinese soldiers that were clinging to the same mast, who were eventually picked up by the French gunboat *Lion*.

Those Englishmen who survive tell how the Chinese officers held revolvers to their heads at the last, threatening to kill them if they surrendered. To my mind the action was a fine one. The Chinese officers could not speak English, the officers of the *Kowshing* could not speak Chinese. The Chinese officers were determined to defend their soldiers and munitions of war against treachery, and did not understand the rules of civilised warfare, any more than the Japanese seem to have done, for there had been no declaration of war. Similarly there had been none at Foo-chow in 1880, when

Admiral Courbet "drew up his nine vessels of war opposite the eleven wooden boats of the Chinese, demanding the immediate surrender of the forts and the fleet. All but one of the Chinese ships were destroyed within a few minutes, and 3,000 Chinese were killed." The Chinese have really not had much opportunity of learning Western rules of warfare, being thus often treated to the exceptions. When, finally, the English officers, hopeless against overwhelming odds, sprang into the water, they were fired on by both Chinese and Japanese, and had to dive and duck their heads to save themselves. Thus those Chinese at least went down fighting to the last against overwhelming odds.

Next, with one voice the experts, who had already been deceived as to whether there would be a war or not, proceeded to declare that Japan would have no chance, would probably have some successes at first, but must in the long run be overwhelmed by the immense numerical superiority, the weight and great resources of the vast Chinese Empire. But I had seen the Hunan braves, the best fighting men of China, floating down the thousand miles or so of Yangtse on the picturesque Chinese junks, with their black kerchiefs round their heads, made fast by twisted pigtails, with scorn for everyone firmly imprinted on their well curved arching lips; and I saw also the Japanese levies, coming in from the mountain districts, assembling at Tokio, without a murmur, in excellent order, with every modern appliance, and evidently perfectly drilled, hardy, resolute, and disciplined. I never could see how there was any possibility of China's succeeding; it seemed as if she must be utterly crushed from the outset, as she indeed was. And I can only attribute the different opinion of the experts to the fact that so few people go into the interior of China and learn really to know the Chinese.

It is curious that Mr. Michie, who calls Li Hung-chang's treaty with Count Ito "the fatal prelude" to the Japanese War, yet has no word of condemnation of his favourite statesman for making such a treaty, while he passes over the *Kowshing* incident completely; yet it is clear that either

Li ought not to have sent soldiers in an English steamer, or else the Japanese had no right to fire on her. The judicial authorities seem in the end to have decided that the blame lay with the Chinese Government, then represented by Li Hung-chang, and that they ought to pay.

Now to give the Chinese version of the whole business! "Korea," they argued, "has been our tributary for the past two hundred odd years. She has given us tribute all this time, which is a matter known to the world. For the past dozen years or so Korea has been troubled by repeated insurrections, and we in sympathy with our small tributary have as repeatedly sent succour to her aid, eventually placing a resident in her capital to protect her own interests. In the fourth moon (May) of this year, another rebellion was begun in Korea, and the King again repeatedly asked for aid from us to put it down. We then ordered Li Hung-chang to send troops, and they having barely reached Yashan the rebels immediately scattered. But the Wojen [an ancient name for Japanese, expressive of contempt], without any cause whatever, suddenly sent their troops also to Korea, and entered its capital, Seoul, reinforcing these constantly until they exceeded ten thousand men. In the meantime they forced the Korean King to change his system of Government, showing a disposition every way of bullying the Koreans. Whereas we, who have been in the habit of assisting our tributaries, have never interfered with their internal government. The various Powers are united in condemning the conduct of the Japanese, and can give no reasonable name to the army she has now in the country. Japan has not been amenable to reason, nor would she listen to the exhortation to withdraw her troops and confer amicably upon what should be done in Korea. On the contrary, she has shown herself bellicose without regard to appearances, and has been increasing her force there. Her conduct alarmed the people of Korea as well as our merchants there, and so we sent more troops over to protect them. Judge of our surprise then when, half way to Korea, a number of the Wojen ships suddenly appeared, and taking advantage of our unprepared-

ness opened fire upon our transports at a spot on the sea-coast near Yashan, and damaged them; thus causing us to suffer from their treacherous conduct which we could not have foreseen.

"Since Japan has violated all law, and is now running rampant with her false and treacherous actions, commencing hostilities herself, and laying herself open to condemnation by the various Powers at large, we therefore desire to make it known to the world that we have always followed the paths of philanthropy and perfect justice throughout the whole complications, while the Wojen, on the other hand, have broken all the laws of nations and treaties; a thing which it passes our patience to bear with. Hence we command Li Hung-chang to give strict orders to our various armies to hasten with all speed to root the Wojen out of their lairs. He is to send successive armies of valiant men to Korea in order to save the Koreans from the dust of bondage. We also command the Manchu General Viceroys and Governors of the Maritime Provinces, as well as the Commanders-in-Chief of the various armies, to prepare for war and to make every effort to fire on the Wojen ships if they come into our ports, and utterly destroy them. We exhort our Generals to refrain from the least laxity in obeying our commands in order to avoid severe punishment at our hands."

By August 3rd, it became known that Imperial disfavour had fallen upon the Viceroy Li Hung-chang and he had been deprived of his Yellow Riding Jacket. To the English mind which sees nothing strange in the bestowal by our Sovereign of a Garter upon the young King of Spain, this seemed quite grotesque, and there were so many jokes about it that the late Consul-General, Sir Chaloner Alabaster, wrote to the *Standard*:—"The deprivation of Li Hung-chang of his Yellow Jacket does not mean that he is disgraced in the sense that disgraced is understood in Europe. It is the custom in China to grant officials honours of various sorts periodically when things go on well, and to take them away when things go ill, and neither the one nor the other means very much, so long as the official is not removed from his post; indeed, so

certain is it that a responsible official will be subjected to stoppage of three months' or even a year's pay, five or six times a year, that they in many cases do not draw their official salary at all during their tenure of office, and a high official is almost invariably deprived of the button of his rank more than once in his career."

It is certainly clear that Li Hung-chang at first resisted the Tsungli-Yamên's pressure. Whether it is true that when he at last gave way about the Japanese war it was because of a deal in munitions of war satisfactory to him, and to others, according to the story before related, will probably never be proved; indeed, it hardly can be. The guns would not have been bought had there not been war, that is clear. But possibly the war had been decided upon in his mind first. In either case, the following account (which, as usual, whenever I can, I quote from an eye-witness) is specially interesting, as showing how Li was understood by all to be solicitous about the legality and strict propriety of China's attitude. It shows also the light in which the *Kowshing* incident appeared to the ordinary Chinese mind, at which we also cannot surely wonder.

Japanese were hustled in the streets of Tientsin, and after the arrival of the survivors of the *Kowshing* butchery with their exasperating story, it was deemed expedient to send the Japanese away at once. The officials of the Taku Tug and Lighter Company very generously placed vessels at the disposal of the poorer class and got them down in the dark on Tuesday night. Under the charge of his American colleague, the Japanese Consul's household was sent down by train on Wednesday and got safely on board the *Chungking*, which had been specially retained till Friday, hoping to take the Chargé d'Affaires from Peking.

Mr. Wilson, an officer in the merchant service, then writes, August 2nd, 7 p.m., 1894:—

"Had a brutal attack at one this morning. While alongside the coal wharf at Tongku was aroused by a terrible noise in saloon; Japanese women yelling and being dragged along the deck and down the gangway, and thrown on the wharf as if

they were pigs or fowls. Fifty soldiers fully armed took control of the ship, guarding all exits; stated they were obeying orders, and as a matter of fact were led by two officers. We never got to bed, and I never witnessed such cruel sights. They spoiled the Japs and extracted over $600, besides watches, trinkets, etc., from the poor women and the Consul's wife. I am sure we have not heard the last of this frightful outrage; when we asked them to be gentle, they only cried out 'Kowshing! Kowshing!' The girls were not ill-treated at the godown adjoining the Customs where they were shut up. The barber and his assistants got on the rigging and remained hid till the others were brought back under escort to the steamer at 5 a.m. The men were in uniform and were armed with rifle, sword and spear; they were said to belong to the neighbouring camp.

"The Consul's wife and children were not taken away; but we had the very greatest trouble to get the soldiers pacified and to persuade them to leave her cabin. The children and the European ladies on board were, of course, very much excited. We simply waited in the saloon while the ladies remained in their cabins; as long as they abstained from violence we deemed it the wisest thing for us to do under the circumstances. At 3 a.m. some half-dozen men fired a volley over the ship's side, and thereupon the women (chiefly of the housekeeper class) were tied up by the wrists and legs. They were brought back on board at 5 a.m. The Viceroy is greatly annoyed at the incident, and ample satisfaction will doubtless be given to all parties concerned. His Excellency has been pluming himself on the strictly neutral attitude of China all through the crisis."

Li had already memorialised the Throne for another 2,000,000 taels. Although the Board of Revenue had not yet sent this last-named sum, the Empress Dowager had, it was reported, ordered the placing apart of 12,000,000 taels to be at the disposal of Li Hung-chang at any time.

Yuan Shih-kai, formerly Chinese Resident in Korea, then Viceroy of Shantung, and after that of Chihli, whom the Chinese generally pronounce responsible for this war, was

appointed by Li to command a division of four thousand men and to start for Korea the following month. He was placed at the head of the military secretaries belonging to the Chinese forces in Korea, and one of his chief duties would be the pacification along the route of the army of the Koreans, who were said to have implicit faith in him, as well as to distribute arms to them. We must not follow the many tragedies of the startling Chino-Japanese war, but this proclamation from the Shanghai Arsenal, put out almost at the beginning of it, we must find room for:

	Taels.
For every actual Japanese spy captured	100
For every Chinese traitor captured	50
For every Japanese spy captured upon information	50
For every Chinese spy captured upon information	40
For the capture of a Japanese ship of war	...100,000
For every Japanese ship of war damaged	8,000
For the capture of each steam-launch that may attack the arsenal	500
For the head of each Japanese killed in battle (in an attack on the arsenal)	50

Kwang Hsü, 30th year, 7th moon (August, 1894).

In September rumours were current in Peking that Chang Pei-lun, the Viceroy's son-in-law, was about to be expelled from the yamên in Tientsin. It was also reported that Li's two nephews bearing his name had incurred the Censor's wrath, and were about to be cashiered; and it now turns out that both rumours were correct.

The outbreak of hostilities had found Li's Peiyang squadron almost literally without a shot in the locker. Chang Pei-lun's equally notorious brother, Chang Shih-yu, the Chief Director of the Imperial Railway both in Formosa and Chihli, kept so tenacious a grip on the purse strings that railway progress was more than once brought to a dead stop. But Chang Pei-lun was a man of totally different stamp. At once a scholar and a man of rare force of character, he had been believed to exert a powerful and evil influence over his

father-in-law for years past. The *Peking Gazette*, with its usual frankness, sums up the case against him thus:

> The Censor Tung Liang requests that Chang Pei-lun be sent home, so that he may no longer interfere in public business. He was formerly cashiered because his services were bad. Lately, in the yamên of the Viceroy of Chihli, he has interfered again in public affairs. We hear many unsatisfactory things about him, and we therefore command Li Hung-chang to send Chang Pei-lun home. He must stay no longer.

In October Li's request to be allowed to take the field in person was granted, and thus at 72 we find the veteran statesman under arms again, but with no Gordon by his side now. Indeed, the Chinese were said to be inquiring whether there were still soldiers to be had of the type of Moltke and Napoleon, and a very high official asked if there were any more Gordons in England. In October Prince Kung was called from his ten years' retirement to take charge of affairs connected with the Tsungli Yamên, the Admiralty, and the Board of War. He was very reluctant to undertake the task—impossible as it seemed—and is said to have made his acceptance conditional on the opening of the Marble Bridge, which the Empress had closed some years before, thereby shutting off the east from the west city, except by long detours to the north and south; the reason being that the Empress had built for herself the beautiful palace in the south-west of the city, where Waldersee and the French General afterwards found their quarters. The lake and its lovely old world environs, with that masterpiece the azure-tiled dragon screen, were reserved for her sole delight. When wandering through these vast pleasure grounds, kept for herself alone, one better appreciates the absolute selfishness of the parvenue.

Prince Kung called round him his old colleagues, and it was then that great consternation prevailed in Cantonese official circles upon Viceroy Li Han-chang receiving the following telegram from his brother Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Chihli: "The mind of the Emperor is inscrutable; be on

your guard and act." Li Han-chang attempted to commit suicide the same evening, and was with difficulty prevented by his attendants from carrying out his intention. At the same time, Shang Taotai, Administrator of Railways, etc. offered two millions of taels to the man who would save Port Arthur; whom some expected to find in General von Hanneken, saved from the *Kowshing* disaster. Soldiers of fortune were again gathering from all the nations of Europe till people wondered how long neutrality would stand the strain thus put upon it.

On November 23rd General Wei Ju-Kuel was beheaded. This man had been the most notoriously corrupt military official in the province for four or five years; and his continued favour had been a very sore point for a long time. The summer before, at the Viceregal inspection of coast defence, his soldiers all but mutinied on the day of the review, and were only kept from disgracing their commander by a liberal largesse and still more liberal promises, which were not kept. Yeh and Nieh, his coadjutors in the Ping-yang flight, had been degraded and disgraced. It was reported that Li was to be removed to Peking, and Liu K'un-yi to be summoned from Nanking to take his place; and that the Court was about to take refuge in the ancient capital Hsian-fu, whither it eventually did retire during the so-called Boxer rising. On November 30th Mr. Detring, the Commissioner of Customs, together with Mr. Michie, the author of "The Englishman in China," left Tientsin for Japan on a diplomatic mission, to try to arrange terms of peace.

But already Li Hung-chang's nurseling and pride, Port Arthur, on the defence of which incredible sums had been expended, had fallen almost without striking one blow in its own defence. At first Europeans could not believe the news, which the Chinese officials were all too glad to contradict. About 13,000 Chinese and about 15,000 Japanese were engaged in the battle; some 2,000 of the former were killed, while the killed and wounded on the other side only amounted to about 200. On entering the fort, the Japanese found everything intact—nothing destroyed. The

following account does not quite tally with this statement, but has at least the merit of being by a Chinese eye-witness and of containing some terribly graphic touches:

"On the night of the 7th November, the Civil Commandant, Kung Taotai, stole across to Chefoo and thence to Tientsin. The next morning, it having got noised abroad that the Civil Commandant had taken to flight, the whole of the enormous staff of artisans and labourers belonging to the various departments left their work and dispersed, and amidst the confusion which then arose the soldiers began to rob and plunder wherever they went. The special body of troops commanded by Kung Taotai himself also began to loot as soon as they heard that their chief had fled, their object being the dockyard money vaults. In a few minutes not a dollar was left in the treasury, while the storehouse was also pillaged of its contents by the very men stationed there to protect the spot. People commenced to move their household effects and families, from what was apparently to be a pandemonium, and the civil portion of the town was in a short time deserted. The commander of the submarine mines and torpedo corps, in his fright, cut the connecting electric wires and immediately fled, carrying away the firing apparatus, his example being well imitated by those under him, so that of the 600 odd torpedoes laid in the harbour not a single one was fired against the enemy. Can a greater disaster be imagined? On the 11th and 12th a portion of our army arrived at Muhch'eng, a place twenty miles from Port Arthur. There they captured five Japanese and five Chinese traitors engaged in spying out the land and drawing maps of the route, details of which appeared to be very precise. At this crisis Kung Taotai returned to Port Arthur, compelled to do so both by the orders of the Viceroy Li and the fear of being arrested by the Governor of Shantung, Li Ping-heng, who was on the look out for deserters of Kung's stamp. Arrived there he called together a council of war of six Generals and various Colonels of battalions then at Port Arthur, and the consternation, irresolution, and jealousy apparent amongst the lot was a picture to see. No one had any plan to offer.

In a short time the forts of Port Arthur were in the hands of the enemy, a portion of whom getting to the barracks of General Chiang's division, began to set the place on fire, which further increased the uproar and confusion. No one stayed; all fled. And

what about Kung Chao-yu, the great Civil Commandant and autocrat of Port Arthur? Having issued in the early part of the day orders to his own battalion to "run and fight as they went," he disguised himself in cotton wadded clothes, like a small trader, and, accompanied by a few body servants and his secretary, crept towards the rear of the dockyard and went out by the back gate, where, getting into a boat, he began his flight. His companion was no other than the younger brother of the Wei of the Sheng division, General Wei Ju-ch'eng. This man had disguised himself as a common soldier. There happened to be quite a gale of wind blowing at the time, and their boat being a small one, it took them from five o'clock that afternoon to ten o'clock the same night before they could weather the mouth of the harbour. It took them four days more to get to Chefoo, and as they passed the outer harbour there could be seen four miles off a fleet of thirteen ships of the enemy, and five torpedo boats cruising about the place, while another fleet of nine English men-of-war could be perceived bound for the stronghold that had just been handed over to a small force of Japanese. Arrived at Chefoo, General Wei Ju-ch'eng left the boat disguised as a boatman; but Kung himself remained in the boat, not daring to expose himself yet. The weather, however, being cold, he sent a servant to Liu Han-fang, the Chefoo Taotai, begging for a sheepskin robe. On the 27th November, taking advantage of a steamer passing through the port en route for Tientsin, Kung took passage in her to beseech the protection of his patron, the powerful Viceroy of Chihli. As for General Wei, he has not been seen since he left the boat at Chefoo. [He was, however, in prison in the Board of Punishments for "treason, peculation and cowardice."] It is also known that General Huang Sze-lin availed himself of a small boat to get away from Port Arthur; but that is all, nothing more having been seen of him since."

No words of comment could add anything to this terrible picture of generals deserting their posts, of cowardice and ineptitude. Is it any wonder that, as with one voice, people should denounce Li Hung-chang, the quasi dictator of China, for years responsible for her naval and military defences, and the patron of all these now thus grossly discredited officials? Can we wonder that a Hanlin Reader and 54 members of the College sent up a memorial against him, too lengthy for

complete insertion here, although well worth the reading?* "Who is it that has had supreme command of the armies?" ask the memorialists. "Who is it that has controlled advance and retreat, led the great against the small, the mighty against the feeble, with the result that a series of such disastrous defeats has been sustained? Who is it, if not the subject of this memorial—the incompetent, arrogant, unprincipled, highly placed official who by his conduct has so imperilled the interests of the State that his name stinks in the nostrils of his countrymen?" Then follow the five counts of the indictment. And again: "It is for this reason that the fate of the country and the welfare of the people entirely hinge on the retention in or dismissal from office of this one man."

Never from Chinese lips have I heard any other view of Li's long management of his country. Chinese are very practical. They say: "He had the power; see the results." Foreigners who had been for years mixed up with him in business dealings, subjected to the influence of the huge fellow's genial personality, are possibly hardly impartial judges; nor do they ever offer any explanation of how China has been brought to its present condition of decrepitude, Li being the ruling spirit. The most, indeed, that can be said, is as follows, in a newspaper paragraph:—

The Viceroy went to Taku on November 27th, to inspect the forts, and to proceed to Shanhaikuan to take charge in person. Among the Chinese it is said that he left before daylight, and with an escort of only seven subordinates, which they consider as a confessed disgrace. Indeed, it is reported that he had been stripped of all his honours. No one man could possibly have discharged the responsible duties that have been piled upon him, and it is pitiful to see an old man like him made to suffer for evils for which others are more responsible than he, great as are his shortcomings. Nothing is heard yet of the approach of Liu K'un-yi and his heavy reinforcement of men for the front. If he does not come soon, his journey north will be useless.

It was said in Chinese circles that valuables and ancient jewels and stones, valued at not less than five million taels,

* The memorial is given *in extenso* in Appendix B.

not including valuable furs and robes in nearly seven hundred trunks, belonging to the family of Li Hung-chang, passed through Tientsin en route for the Yangtze, under the charge of his eldest son, who remained incognito while going through Shanghai. Foreign lady residents were still forbidden to return to Peking, and a great exodus of Chinese families had taken place from Peking for the south.

Two important Imperial Edicts were issued by which Kung, the Civil Commandant of Port Arthur, and the four Generals appointed by the Viceroy Li to hold that important fortress, were ordered to be placed under arrest and sent to Peking for punishment. Admiral Ting was also held censurable for the loss of the naval station.

At last Liu K'un-yi, who was said to be anything but easy at the prospect of stepping into the great Li's shoes, arrived in Tientsin, and was received in state by all the local, civil, and military officials, headed by the Viceroy Li, in his capacity as Governor-General of the province. People felt curious as to how these chiefs of the two great political factions of China—the one a Hunan man, the other the representative of Anhui—would conduct themselves when they met. But although one had come to supersede the other, and, to all intents and purposes, had been selected by the Emperor to strip his rival of a large portion of his hitherto supreme power, Li displayed to the outside world nothing of whatever he might be feeling, but maintained a dignified courtesy towards the Viceroy Liu K'un-yi, even, indeed, appearing cordial. The latter left almost immediately for his audience with the Emperor.

It was thought at the time that the coming of Liu K'un-yi to the north had upset all the manœuvres of the Peace Party at Peking and Tientsin, but Mr. Detring was only recalled from Japan because the United States Ministers at Tokio and Peking offered their mediation. And but for this offer some people still maintain that he would have arranged a peace. Mr. Detring's mission had such a strange appearance to Europeans that it is as well to quote from Li's despatch to Count Ito about it:—

Our Ta Ch'ing dynasty is in the enjoyment of its traditional policy of peace with every nation, save that lately has risen an unhappy dispute with your country, whereby the usual friendly intercourse has been exchanged for a state of war. Seeing that no inconsiderable calamities have lately fallen upon the people, it is now proposed that both countries temporarily direct their forces by sea and land to cease hostilities. Memorialising the Throne upon the advisability of this course, the commands of His Imperial Majesty, my august master, have been received as follows:

"Whereas Mr. Detring has held office in our Empire for many years, and proved himself faithful, true, and worthy of the highest trust. We command Li Hung-chang to inform him fully and completely of whatever has so far been deliberated upon and decided, and ask him to proceed without delay to Japan to effect a settlement as occasion arises. Mr. Detring will inform us confidentially and with due speed by telegram through Li Hung-chang of the progress of negotiations."

In accordance with his Majesty's commands, Mr. Detring, an official holding rank of the first grade, has been directed to proceed forthwith to Tokio to present this despatch and learn the conditions upon which peace may be regained and amicable intercourse be re-established as of old. Therefore, requesting that your Excellency will discuss with Mr. Detring how friendly relations may be restored, this despatch is written commending the proposal to the favourable consideration of your Excellency.

Already some time before, Wen Tung-ho, the Emperor's tutor, and Wen Ting-shih, a near relation of the Viceroy Chang Chih-tung, then tutor to the ladies of the Imperial household, afterwards for a time the nominal head of the Reform Party, had memorialised the Emperor suggesting the removal of the capital westward. In reply the young Emperor issued an Edict, the substance of which ran thus: "When we first took charge of the Empire it was our intention to introduce many reforms. Suddenly and unexpectedly the Japanese have broken the peace, taken away our Korean dependency, and taken possession of the borders of our Empire. We have sent our Generals with their armies to punish the Japanese and drive them away, but we never intended to disturb the peace of the Japanese Empire.

This our ancestors and foreign nations all know. Little did we expect that the Generals were incompetent and the soldiers insubordinate, so that the Japanese gained victor after victory and place after place, till our ancestors in their very graves were disturbed. This is because we are unworthy and have employed unfit men. If, however, the worst come and the Japanese get the sacred altars, then there remains nothing for us but to perish with them. When that time comes, may you reverently escort the Empress Dowager westward and elect a worthy man to be the Emperor and to look after the sacred altars of our ancestors and wipe off this disgrace."

In January, 1895, comes a Decree from the Empress Dowager herself:

Our dynasty ever since its establishment has always been very careful in maintaining strict discipline within the Palace, and especially is strict supervision kept over the various members of the Imperial harem, none being allowed to interfere in any way whatever in affairs of State or in the Government of the Empire. Her Majesty, however, finds that the Imperial concubines, Ch'ing Fei and Chen Fei, taking advantage of their proximity to the Imperial presence, have been trying to use their influence, asking for favours on behalf of their relations and friends, conduct which, if allowed to pass unnoticed, will surely be productive of dangerous results in the future. Although on account of their general good behaviour Ch'ing Fei and Chen Fei have been gradually promoted until they are Imperial concubines of the third rank, still, in order to prevent others from following this dangerous precedent, some penalty must be forthcoming. We command therefore that the said concubines be forthwith degraded two steps, as a slight punishment and warning to the rest of the harem.

Tze Jui, the father of the two concubines, a leading spirit in the Hanlin College, and of late the energetic supporter of the Anti-Li party, in accordance with whose representations Mr. von Hanneken had been called to the capital and entrusted with the re-organisation of China's military forces, was at the same time nominated Governor of a remote district on the Siberian frontier.

On the 12th February, 1895, Admiral Ting had sent a flag of truce to the Japanese Admiral, offering to surrender all the men-of-war, arms and fortifications, provided that the safety of the crews of the vessels, soldiers and foreigners with them, were guaranteed. Arrangements for the surrender were formally made, and the Japanese Admiral congratulated the Chinese on having made a gallant defence.

Chinese officials generally stoutly maintained their disbelief in the news of Admiral Ting's surrender, declaring that it was impossible that he would risk the lives of so many people belonging to his own family and those of the officers under him, who would be surely put to death if he had surrendered.

However, Wei-hai-wei capitulated on the 12th, and Admiral Ting, Commodore Liu, and General Chang committed suicide that night. Chang, late Civil Commandant of the forts on Liu Kungtao Island, was a nephew of the late Lady Li. Of the gallant Ting I have written at length in "Intimate China," his life being that of a very typical Chinese of the nobler kind.

Thus may be said to have ended the Japanese war, leaving Li deprived indeed of all his honours and titles "to bring him to a better state of mind," but yet sufficiently powerful to secure the disgrace of all those who had dared to move against him.

LI HUNG-CHANG (ABOUT 1896).

To face p. 282.

CHAPTER XX.

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS (1895).

A CENSOR memorialised the Throne on behalf of General T'ang Wen-lien (Provincial Commander-in-Chief of Kuang-tung), who had been called up in the preceding October from the south to take command of the Chinese army covering Moukden, and Li is denounced for having refused to deliver over 10,000 rifles specially bought for this General Tang's new Hunan levies, yet placed in the Peiyang Ordnance godown at Tientsin. In consequence, that large brigade had been lying idle and destitute of arms and ammunition at Shanhaikuan, when it was urgently needed to reinforce the armies in Manchuria. This memorial was to be a test case; if the Emperor took the matter up, there were to be many others like it, and the onus of China's humiliation would then be placed upon one man alone—Li Hung-chang.

Li, having on February 18th, 1895, handed over the seal of the Imperial High Commissionership of the Peiyang forces, and on the 19th that of the Viceroyalty of Chihli, to H.E. Wang Wen-shao, ex-Viceroy of Yuhnan and Kweichon, started for Peking with a very small retinue of only about a dozen persons accompanying him. These visits to Peking are rather more serious than they sound, for each was reputed to cost Li at least from four to five thousand pounds, while on this occasion the Empress's favourite, the pseudo-eunuch, is reported to have charged a fabulous sum.

Before Li started, the outside world heard that the Emperor would not take any more excuses as to his inability to arrest the Generals who disappeared upon the fall of

Port Arthur. Another Decree had been sent down again peremptorily ordering the arrest of those Generals within a specified time, and their properties in their native provinces had already been confiscated.

The Viceroy Chang Chih-tung, assisted by Mr. Moorhead, Commissioner of Customs, had been meanwhile busy thoroughly reorganising the Nanyang, or southern squadron of five large cruisers and six gunboats. The incompetent officers hitherto in command had been all dismissed, and officers educated in the foreign system placed in command. It was anticipated that the squadron would be ready to try conclusions with the enemy by the beginning of March. It is interesting to notice that the Admiral, who was made to retire by the Viceroy, nevertheless contributed some £12,000 towards naval expenses. Is not this very unlike the men Li had gathered about him?

At the Capital, Li was twice received in audience by the Emperor in the Grand Council Chamber. The Emperor announced it as his intention to put the question of prolonged war or immediate peace to the votes of the high provincial authorities from the first to the third rank, inclusive; to save time the memorials of the various officials were to be telegraphed to Peking. At once five out of the eight Viceroys, seven out of the sixteen Governors, six out of twenty-one Treasurers, and three out of the twenty Judges of China Proper, including Formosa and Kashgaria, sent in their replies. More than two-thirds of the memorials advocated peace if Japan desired an indemnity only, however large the amount might be, but declared for war to the bitter end if the enemy desired to keep any of the conquered territory; on the ground that the Emperor's prerogative did not include the giving away of land obtained by his ancestors at the cost of so much bloodshed. This is an idea very deeply rooted in the Chinese mind, which has far more defined notions as to what you have a right to do and what you have no right to do than are entertained in Europe. The Chinese are not fond of fighting, and are generally ready to submit to what they are convinced is in accordance with justice.

If what is to their minds injustice is forced upon them, they bide their time and watch for an opportunity to shake it off.

After one or two futile attempts at missions, which fell through even in the case of the United States' intervention by means of its Ministers, the Japanese Government early in March intimated its willingness to receive the Viceroy Li Hung-chang as an Envoy, provided the authority given to Li were submitted to it first. The English text of the credentials was approved, but exception was taken to the Chinese text, as implying that Japan, not China, was suing for peace. To make quite sure that no underhand reservation was made, the Viceroy was to be received at Shimonoseki, where his full credentials were to be examined; and then only if everything proved to be satisfactory, Li would be permitted to proceed with his negotiations.

The Emperor had given Li no present on his visit to the Capital, which was much commented upon, and probably had a deep significance.

People say that the Viceroy postponed his departure several days, hoping to succeed in his attempt to see the Empress, but all in vain. One day he went to call, and, in the little Sedan chair provided inside the palace for high officials who do not ride, was carried to the apartments of the Empress Dowager, where he waited for two long hours and still failed to see his august mistress. As a Chinese remarked, the Empress Dowager is very cunning, and does not like to be mixed up in a bad business.

While at Peking Li visited all the foreign Ministers and also Sir Robert Hart. It would be interesting to know what passed between the two old servants of the Dowager Empress. A full record may possibly be presented to the world when Sir Robert Hart's diary is published, which alone of all his possessions was saved when, a few years later, his house was destroyed by the infuriated soldiery of the same Empress, and he himself only escaped with his life; indebted to the English Minister for a "roof over his head," as well as for his "daily rice," as he wrote to his employers, the Chinese Government, in a letter full of a noble indignation.

Li was appointed Plenipotentiary and formally acknowledged by the Japanese Government, and then the Emperor of China began sending forth to the various crowned heads and Presidents of Republics a melancholy series of appeals for help, which read like the anguished cries of an unreasoning woman driven to despair. These we must put down to Tze Hsi, the Dowager Empress, a woman whose career seems to have varied in accordance with the character of the prime favourite of the hour. Since she fell under the dominion of the pseudo-eunuch Li Lien-ying, it must be admitted that she has shown much business capacity; but she has given no sign of the statesmanship which Europeans yet so liberally impute to her. It is not generally understood that Chinese women of a certain age are accustomed to try at least each to be the ruling spirit in a household, and to display an amount of energy that English women seem to disburse in their younger days. During the days of Tze An, the other little talked of Empress Regent, and Prince Kung, the Chinese Government made none of the terrible mistakes that have been committed since this extravagant and imperious woman stepped to power over the bodies of her dead rivals; and of late years her every effort seems to have been concentrated on obtaining money by hook or by crook, which money was generally in the end diverted to gratifying her caprices. Thus, when Prince Kung ordered the closing of the Admiralty Board, as being no longer needed, all the ships being lost, in the accounts of the Board there was about a million sterling unaccounted for; and it was insinuated that this large amount had been appropriated to the use of the Empress Dowager. A partial explanation suggests itself. Anyone who has of late been over the Summer Palace must at once have been struck by the trumpery and gaudy character of the repairs there executed for her, contrasting with the old work still to be seen in its ruined condition on the far side of the hill; showing how the Empress has been cheated by her contractors.

Li departed on his mission. An old man, knowing his country to be at Japan's feet, he had been sent rather by

his enemies than by his own party to treat for a peace which all alike knew must make his name hated throughout China. The big bully, as some people considered him, the one statesman of China, as others have described him, Li, the magnificent, the pleasure lover, the holder of countless posts, the jovial host, the kindly grandfather, was at the lowest ebb of his fortunes ; and almost everyone was compassionately regretting that he had not been allowed to retire when he first sent in a memorial on the subject, and when people might have thought that the glory of China had departed with grand old Li. But the luck turned when, after the third conference between the Plenipotentiaries of China and Japan on March 24th, on his way back from the meeting, the Viceroy was fired upon by a Japanese fanatic.

Count Ito, Viscount Mutsu, and other Japanese officials at once went to make personal inquiries, and the Emperor of Japan immediately despatched two Imperial Surgeons-General by special steamer, and an aide-de-camp to convey messages of condolence from himself and the Empress. The whole of Japan felt deep sorrow, and two nations, indeed it may be said all the civilised world, hoped that the wound might not prove fatal.

Japan voluntarily granted an armistice during his convalescence, and the foreign community of Tientsin telegraphing a message of sympathy and inquiry, received the following friendly answer :—

"Thanks to all for their kind remembrance. Wound painful ; bullet cannot be safely removed, but I am improving steadily and can attend to business from my bed. My best thanks to the whole community."

Li, a practical man, who knew his world, as usual did the right thing ; he kept quite calm ; he did not in any way seek to make a hero of himself ; therefore the world did it for him, and *he got well.*

As to the negotiations themselves, to give a clearer idea of the characters of the Viceroy Li Hung-chang and Count Ito, I am kindly permitted by the North China *Herald* to borrow from it an account of some conversations between the

two, written by a Chinese at the time, and bearing in its every phrase the imprint of truth.

Count Ito opened the first conversation by congratulating the Viceroy on his convalescence, and after the latter had made some polite inquiries as to the health of Viscount Mutsu, one of the Japanese Plenipotentiaries, who was suffering from an attack of "Spring" fever, Count Ito mentioned that his father and mother were both hale at the age of eighty. The Viceroy remarked that Shimonoseki was famed for its good men and its beautiful products, but Count Ito averred that it was not to be compared with Hunan and Anhui (the latter being Li's native province); on which Li said: "Hunan is somewhat like Satsuma; the people are much devoted to military matters. Shimonoseki is very like Anhui, but the comparison quickly fails; we are far behind you"; the Count politely replying that the blame of the recent defeat lay upon China, not upon Anhui. Then after a few minutes, he called the Viceroy to business. "The armistice," he said, "has now lasted several days, and the end begins to draw near. The treaty should be settled as soon as possible, and in order that time may not be wasted, I have here a memorandum upon the revised articles. With regard to the two memoranda of the Grand Secretary, one is very lengthy, and there is a proposal to make a change in the main body of the treaty. Being fully aware of the difficulties under which China labours, I have prepared this memorandum, in which our original demands have been reduced as much as possible. But reduction has a limit, and I also have difficulties to contend with. When the Grand Secretary has read over this document, he will perceive that it requires but one of two replies—Yes or No."

Li: "This can scarcely be construed to mean that no discussion is admissible?"

Count Ito: "Discussion can lead to nothing further; the terms cannot be reduced."

Li then urged that the position of China ought to be considered, to which Count Ito replied that if the Viceroy insisted upon discussion, it must be done upon the lines

of the original draft, as the revised draft with its reductions represented all that many days of argument would have arrived at. Li began again by saying that the indemnity, two hundred million taels, was too large to be borne.

"The reduction I have made is final," said Count Ito. "Why don't you make your loans for forty years, instead of twenty?"

"Would Japan lend us the money?" said the Viceroy.

"We could not manage it," answered the Count; "you can borrow the money from foreigners; your credit is good enough; China is ten times as large as Japan; her people are four hundred millions; her resources are enormous and easy to develop. When a country is in difficulties, then is the time for men's abilities to appear, and use can be made of them to develop her resources."

After another fruitless attempt to get the principal of the indemnity reduced, the Viceroy demurred to interest being charged. China had never paid interest on previous indemnities. At last Count Ito promised that if the indemnity were paid off in two years, or only a trifling sum were left unpaid in the second year, the interest should be waived. But Li wanted the interest to be waived unconditionally. "Though Japan has been victorious," he said, "why should she press us so very hard as to be unbearable?"

Count Ito: "Does 'unbearable' mean refusal?"

Li: "I am sincerely anxious to restore peace, but I cannot refrain from pointing out what seems impossible to consent to."

Count Ito, however, was firm, and Li passed to the consideration of the territory to be ceded. He thought it too hard that China should be forced to give up the whole of the Liaotung peninsula. "The troops of Great Britain and France," he said, "occupied our cities for a time, but they never demanded a foot of territory."

Count Ito: "They had other ideas, and their action is not binding upon us."

"But we have a custom-house at Newchwang," said Li,

"and you are taking that away from us, while asking us to pay a big indemnity."

"Further concession here is impossible," said the Count.

The Viceroy then went on to say that he could not give up Formosa, and there was quite a little passage of arms between the two, ending in Li's saying: "To sum up these three articles: two hundred millions is enormous, and I must ask a further reduction; I ask that Newchwang be restored; and Formosa is out of the question."

Count Ito: "In that case we have dissimilar views; I can do no more than hand over the modified articles of the revised treaty. As time presses, much cannot be done. If this arrangement be acceptable, all the better; if not, then it must be rejected."

The Viceroy: "Is it not for me to reject?"

Count Ito: "Rejection is all very well, but my views cannot be changed in the least. The Grand Secretary naturally desires a speedy settlement, and so do I. But more than sixty transports, of a total tonnage of two hundred thousand tons, are at Hiroshima, and several have left port to-day. War material is all ready, and has not been sent away because of the stipulations of the armistice."

The Viceroy: "When the armistice finishes, an extension may be requested."

Count Ito: "If a treaty has been signed an extension may be allowed; if not, it cannot."

In vain did Li beg for a little more time, as he had to get an Imperial rescript from Peking. Three days were all Count Ito would give; the Japanese Generals in the field had to be informed. The Viceroy thought there might be an answer from Peking and another conference in five days; meanwhile he begged for a reduction of the indemnity by fifty millions, and he could not give up Formosa.

"In that case I must take it," said the Count.

"The French found it too hard a nut to crack," said the Viceroy; "besides which we want to be friends."

"Indemnity and the cession of territory are like debts,"

said the Count; "after the debts are paid we shall naturally be friends."

"You press your debtors too hard," said the Viceroy; and he went on to point out that Formosa was full of malaria, and the people had to use opium as a prophylactic.

"We intend to prohibit the use of opium," said the Count promptly.

"I respect you for it," said Li; and then he indulged in the old misrepresentation, that Great Britain forced opium into China against the Government's will.

"It will be necessary to find some means of prohibiting your people from buying it," said the Count, "and the importation will soon stop."

The Viceroy then rose to take leave of Count Ito. While they were shaking hands, he asked once more for a reduction of the indemnity; Count Ito smiled, but shook his head, saying "Impossible"; and the sitting was at an end.

On June 24th Count Ito read the English version, had it explained in Japanese by his secretary, and then, we are told, smoked a cigar to gain time. At last he delivered himself: "Before the Grand Secretary left China, he and his Government quite understood the actual condition of affairs between our two countries, and are, I presume, sincere in their negotiations for peace and a renewal of friendly relations?"

The Viceroy must have felt a little annoyed at this renewed doubt of his sincerity, and he replied: "I am an old man who has never been abroad before in his life. My Government has a clear idea of the actual position of affairs, and knowing me to be an old friend of the Minister (Count Ito), sent me upon this mission. This seems to me sufficient proof of sincerity, nor could I decline the proffered task."

Count Ito—soon to be undeceived—replied that "the present negotiations affected only China and Japan; other Powers having no concern whatever with the question, and not being involved in the slightest degree." "We are practically left to our own resources," said Li, though it is hardly doubtful that he knew better; and he told a story of a

conversation with Okuba, who passed through Tientsin on his way to Peking, after sending an expedition to Formosa, and who agreed that the murder of some Japanese traders by a few irresponsible savages was not worth quarrelling about.

Count Ito at once brought the conversation back to the gravity of his own duties, and to the difficulty that he would have in remaining long at Shimonoseki.

Li replied that if the terms of the draft treaty were not too onerous, it could soon be arranged.

Count Ito: "The people of both countries are anxiously waiting for the treaty, and it were well to settle it quickly. Negotiations must not be so prolonged as is ordinarily the case, especially when it is considered that the armies are still face to face in the field, and every day causes a further loss of life." Then, with a polite question from the Viceroy as to the Emperor's movements, the sitting terminated.

It was on his way to his lodgings from this sitting on March 24th that the Viceroy was shot at and wounded; in consequence of which a partial armistice, called unconditional, was at once granted by the Emperor of Japan.

Eight days afterwards, on the 1st April, Count Ito submitted Japan's first draft of the treaty of peace. Four days after that, on the 5th April, the Viceroy sent his reply; and on the 6th April Ito wrote back that "an elaborate recital of the domestic difficulties of the Empire of China" was no reply at all, and that the Viceroy must "definitely announce his acceptance or non-acceptance of the draft treaty of peace already presented, either *en bloc* or severally article by article"; and the Viceroy accordingly submitted a counter-draft of the treaty on the 9th April. On the next day, the 10th, Count Ito submitted his replies to this counter-draft, specifying all the reductions that Japan was prepared to make.

At this the fourth and last conference, on April 10th, Count Ito began: "As I said before, the limit of concession has been reached. I am very sorry, but it is impossible to make any further concession."

Li: "I have received a rescript from his Majesty directing

me to decide according to my discretion; but the matter is of such vast importance that I am entirely at a loss; I wish the Minister would decide for me." Count Ito said he should be blamed for conceding so much, and the Viceroy felt that he would be blamed for not obtaining better terms. If Count Ito would only make one or two changes in the treaty, he (the Viceroy) could undertake the responsibility of signing it; he especially wanted some concessions in the two items—indemnity and cession of territory.

Count Ito: "I spoke plainly at the very first. It is impossible to give way in the least. Yesterday I informed Lord Li that we had reached the limit of possible concession. If this is not so, why have three or four conferences been necessary to reach the present understanding? I have carefully considered the circumstances of China, and reduction has reached the vanishing point. Negotiating a peace is not like haggling in a market-place, where each party is trying to beat the other down. It is not dignified."

On this the Viceroy began to haggle. The *Shimbun* said that the war had only cost Japan eighty millions. Count Ito looked at the paper and said: "Whatever this paper says is always inimical to the Government and unworthy of credence."

"Just make a little reduction," said the Viceroy, "and I will telegraph to my Government to accept gratefully." Then he complained that the territory Japan asked for was too large and had great possibilities; but Count Ito said that whatever resources existed in the new territory had to be developed, and could not be regarded as a set-off to the indemnity. Besides, any wealth that might accrue would be spent in the territory; there would be no surplus.

"Let us turn to Formosa," said Li, "which the Chinese have not exploited well. It has coal mines, gold mines, and kerosene wells. If I had been Governor I should have opened all these."

"Again, there is the expense of development," said the Count.

"The greater the expenditure," said the Viceroy, "the

greater the return. Since in the future the gain will be so solid, what can stand in the way of a slight reduction? In that case it would be easier for China to borrow the requisite amount. When I was in Peking some foreigners were ready to lend twenty millions sterling on the security of Formosa. After I had reached Japan everyone heard that Japan was bent upon obtaining possession of the island, and so that affair can no longer be mentioned. So much having been offered with the island as a pledge, naturally it could have been sold for much more."

Count Ito, however, refused to be talked over, though the Viceroy begged again and again for only a little concession in either money or territory. If a little reduction were made, it would be a parting gift which the Viceroy would always remember with pleasure.

Count Ito: "The amount which has been reduced is a parting gift. As I said yesterday, I was unwilling at first to make any change in the treaty as originally drafted, but have reduced the indemnity by a hundred millions out of regard for a friendship of many years' standing."

Li: "Such stubborn cruelty I shall always remember."

Count Ito replied that he had conceded a great deal and would be freely abused for having done so. He hoped the Viceroy would decide before the armistice expired, or it seemed probable that the conditions would be much more severe.

"Well, then, if Count Ito could not reduce the indemnity, would he waive the interest?"

Count Ito had already promised that if the principal were paid in two years, interest would be waived.

"Would Count Ito accept the interest and let the principal stand over?"

"No; this would be tantamount to Japan's lending the money, which she is in no position to do."

"Well, then if the principal were paid within three years, would Japan waive the interest?"

"Yes," said the Count.

"Perhaps this had better be inserted in the treaty," said the

Viceroy, "or how would it do to take twenty millions from the indemnity in order to meet the interest, leaving the one hundred and eighty millions to be dealt with as in the treaty?"

"No, thank you," said Count Ito.

The Viceroy: "If twenty millions be taken off, China need borrow that sum the less."

Count Ito: "It is absolutely impossible."

Then there was a dispute as to how this provision—that if China paid the principal in three years, interest should be waived—should be inserted in the treaty; the Viceroy repeating that when China had to pay indemnities to England and France, it was clearly stated that interest was to be paid only upon overdue instalments. At last after much reflection, Count Ito agreed that interest should be paid for three years according to the original scheme. Then, if payment were made in full within three years, the interest already made would be regarded as principal.

Again Li said: "Let Formosa be omitted from the treaty until you have taken it," and then, after further conversation, "within a month is pressing us too hard. The Premier and I are too far from Formosa really to appreciate all the conditions involved. The best way would be for the Chinese Government to direct the Government of Formosa to come to an understanding with the High Commissioners sent by Japan to Formosa as to the regulations and details of transfer. When ratifications have been once exchanged, and the two countries have fairly entered upon cordial relations, then any matter can be discussed."

Count Ito: "A month is enough."

The Viceroy: "Everything is in a state of confusion. Two months would allow things to become comparatively settled. Why be in such a hurry about Formosa when it is actually in in your mouth?"

Count Ito; "We have not swallowed it yet, and we are very hungry."

The Viceroy: "Two hundred millions are enough to appease your appetite for a time."

The treaty was signed on April 18th. Li then returned

to Tientsin, arriving there in good health on the 20th. After the receipt of Li's telegram reporting his arrival at Tientsin from Japan, the Emperor held a long audience with the members of the Grand Council of War. The main clauses of the Treaty of Peace were discussed, but nothing definite had been arrived at. The populace of Peking appeared at the time to be in total ignorance of what had been going on during the peace negotiations, refusing to believe that any portion of Manchuria was to be given up to Japan, and grew indifferent about Formosa. This shows how differently the people feel in different parts of China. For all along the Yangtse Valley, and especially in far distant Szechuan, I had not believed the people capable of so much feeling about a public event as high and low showed over the cession of Formosa. Tearful questions and incredulity, then a silence that was worse than tears, was the way in which the information was generally received. After which the visitor would take leave only very perfunctorily, going through the usual forms of politeness. Not a word more, only an air of being crushed, absolutely crushed under the blow that the Emperor had given up Formosa, that pearl of the Chinese crown.

Li Hung-chang started on April 30th for Peking, although his sick leave had not yet expired; partly owing to the urgent commands of the Emperor, who desired to consult with the Viceroy personally before deciding whether to ratify the treaty or not, and partly because Prince Kung had informed Li that unless he speedily made his appearance at the capital all the trouble and danger gone through in Japan would be so much labour lost. Certain ministers of State and Princes had suggested the doubling or trebling the war indemnity in lieu of the cession of Manchurian territory, while all officials in Peking who came from Fukien, to which province Formosa belonged, had in a body protested against the cession of that island to Japan, offering to contribute enough money to buy it up if necessary. Thus with Chinese it is always a question of money. They began the war by setting prices upon Japanese heads, they now

hoped to conclude it by buying back Formosa. Our Peace Party ought at least greatly to approve of this last idea. It is what we all should come to, if we followed their doctrines as the Chinese tried to do for centuries. But it seems ignoble to the ordinary twentieth century mind.

For the past fortnight the Emperor had been deluged with memorials from the provinces; not a single Viceroy, Governor, Tartar General, or Provincial Commander-in-Chief having abstained from his privilege of memorialising the Throne and advising the rejection of the Li-Ito treaty, by which the cession of territory had been agreed upon. The vote for a continuance of the war, if Japan insisted upon the observance of the whole treaty, also seems to have been unanimous on the part of these officials; who, furthermore, guaranteed funds for the prosecution of the war, while Viceroy Liu K'un-yi and General Sung Ching declared their intention of fighting to the death before giving up Manchuria to Japan. Liu K'un-yi and the other Yangtse Viceroy, Chang Chih-tung, were always amongst the most strenuous opponents of Li Hung-chang. Some of the high officials even went so far as to send in sealed memorials suggesting the annihilation of the Li party "as a set of traitors to sovereign and country, one and all without exception."

The terms of the treaty that Li signed on April 18th are stated briefly:

1st. Formosa ceded permanently.

2nd. Territory between Yalu River on the east and Port Arthur on the west, up to the 40° of N. latitude, ceded permanently.

3rd. Indemnity of 30,000,000 pounds sterling, payable in fifteen years.

4th. Five new ports or places to be opened for trade, including Peking and Nanking.

There is no doubt that but for the Dowager Empress's protection at this juncture, Li would have lost his head for signing such a treaty. Tze-hsi seems to have at least one good quality, and it is a great one; she always stands by

her friends. Across the years there came to her possibly the memory of Li's midnight march and entrance into Peking at the head of his men, each carrying a chop-stick between his teeth, and of two trembling women saved perchance from what now threatened him—an ignominious death. And her heart went out to the man who had since then risen from post to post to the highest offices in China, and had always remained true to her. And she saved him.

CHAPTER XXI.

LI'S TRIUMPHAL PROGRESS (1896).

MR. MICHIE draws attention to the fact that China was "defeated amid the applause of Europe and the whole world." It is a curious fact, the more curious in that the next move of Europe was to receive with acclamations and almost as a monarch the very man who must be held responsible, if any one man ever were, for China's downfall. Had we been crushed in the Transvaal and our conquerers been acclaimed by the whole of Europe, our feelings might perhaps have then a little resembled those of the Chinese in 1895. They are a proud people, and they have taken to reading foreign newspapers in translation. If ever there was a war that seemed to dispassionate onlookers without justification, it was that of Japan and China. But the Japanese, like Bismark, chose the psychological moment, and they crushed China utterly.

For a long time past the British—as was once remarked to me by the distinguished minister of a foreign Power with genuine regret—had made of themselves *une quantité negligeable*; and now they remained apart and quiescent, while Russia, France, and Germany came forward together to induce Japan to withdraw her forces from Manchuria and to give up Port Arthur and the Liaoting peninsula generally, in consideration of an increased indemnity. Mr. Michie more than hints that, when Li agreed to the Japanese demands, he was really thankful for their severity, since he knew that their very gravity would bring down the interference of other Powers, and especially that of Russia. People in England never seem to think of these diplomatic finesses; they were delighted with our Government for its splendid

isolation. "Keeping clear of all international complications," they called it, whilst Englishmen in the East walked about with bowed heads. But they still complained—a healthy sign always in Englishmen. The time was still to come when they would cease even to do that.

Residents in China had for long been trying to put their information, their serious views on public questions, at the disposition of Government; but the latter seems to have a distinct dislike to information that does not come through an official channel. It would hardly be believed, if it were not demonstrably true, that despite the large number of English men and women in China, possessed of an intimate knowledge of the Chinese language and customs, entirely disinterested, many of them acute and deep thinkers, not any use whatever is made of them to get correct intelligence as to what is going on in the remote corners of the Chinese Empire. Only the English nation acts like this. The French, for instance, habitually make use of the Roman Catholic missionaries, in especial of the Missions Étrangères composed exclusively of Frenchmen, as a great unpaid Intelligence Department. On the face of it, it would seem natural that all Consuls should snatch at opportunities of getting accurate news from correspondents; yet, so rarely is this done, that our Consul-General in China, Sir Pelham Warren, is always mentioned as "the man who is so well informed," because he does have correspondents outside the Consular Service.

It is generally said that it was because of the complete breakdown of the English Intelligence Department in China that England carried no weight when the other nations were modifying the Japanese treaty. Now how can a thing break down that does not exist? At the period in question, can there be said to have been any Intelligence Department in China at all? One gallant officer states that he sent home full and detailed accounts of all the little trifles, such as, for instance, the great Chinese Arsenals which Admiral Seymour's column took because they happened to stumble across them by accident; trifles which, nevertheless,

apparently remained unknown. Certainly, no notice was taken of this information at the Foreign Office, where there is not yet one man who could be said by anyone to know China, nor any department for specially dealing with the affairs of the Far East. This would not matter so much if the telegraph wires could be kept permanently cut. Left to themselves, Englishmen in the East could not only look after themselves and their own interests, but those of their country into the bargain, even with the other Governments of Europe each backing its own capitalists by threats of war. But when people quite uninformed about China and the Chinese are yet continually telegraphing instructions to Peking—well known in diplomatic circles as "the grave of reputations"—that way of escape is barred.

Within two months of the revision of the treaty of Shimonoseki, while England was complacently "keeping clear of international complications," the French were compelling China to sign away to them among other things a portion of the Shan States, reserved in the treaty between China and Great Britain, as a neutral zone; the Russian Minister the day following making "a formal visit to the Tsungli Yamên, with more than the customary display, to congratulate the Chinese Ministers on what they had done, and to assure them of the approval of his Government." Everyone was wanting to lend money to China. When the English offered £16,000,000, Russia objected, and insisted on the Chinese borrowing from the French while she herself stood security, thereby "assuring the position of first mortgagee on the revenues of China. That accomplished, Russia stipulated that China should contract no further loan for a period of six months."

It seemed then and seems still impossible to gain serious consideration for affairs in the Far East. Place and power and the votes of constituents are not to be won by care and energy about Eastern affairs. Whilst our Imperial Parliament is hampered by the management of all the quasi-parochial affairs of Great Britain and Ireland, we cannot wonder at that Parliament more and more adopting a *klein stadtisch* tone.

But England's interests are far deeper and wider reaching than little vestry questions.

It will only be when the effect on our commerce comes to be felt that people at home may begin to realise how their own direct interests were at stake at this time; and how many millions a year a country may be saved by a great name for power. But it may be too late by then.

From far away Szechuan now came the news that as soon as the new Viceroy of that province entered it he was besieged by petitions from people who had complaints to make, the majority being against the retiring Viceroy. No less than two hundred and fifty petitions of this kind were received. Liu Ping-chang, the retiring Viceroy, it may be remembered, was Li Hung-chang's particular friend and ally. He had come some way down the river Yangtse, on his journey home to Anhui, when the Imperial Rescript compelled him to retrace his steps; and in the end the British Government was firm about him, and he was degraded, never to hold office again. The Chinese Legation in London stated that his degradation had been decided upon before the British ultimatum was sent in. A French official note ascribed the decision to the pacific pressure exercised by France. But out in China we attributed it to Sir Nicholas O'Conor.

Lord Li, Li's adopted son, had, since his return from the peace conference in Japan, been occupying his leisure hours in superintending the building of a handsome house in foreign style inside the capacious gardens of his father situated on the river foreshore at Wuhu. The furniture and appointments of the new building were of the best English and French make, luxurious and elegant. They had cost something like 30,000 taels, while the value of the knick-knacks was said to amount to a fabulous sum—mostly gifts presented to him and the Viceroy in the last fifteen years.

In August Li was summoned to Peking from Tientsin, and an Imperial Decree was issued ordering him to do duty as Manager of the Imperial Chancery, or Prime Minister of China. Wang Wen-shao, acting Viceroy of Chihli, was

confirmed in Li's former posts in Tientsin, and it was stated that Li, being comfortably off, was anxious to retire, like his elder brother Li Han-chang, into private life, but that the Throne would not dispense with his services. Li, in fact, was required at Peking. to assist in arranging the new commercial treaty with Japan. The Tsungli Yamên wished Mr. Hayashi, the Japanese Minister, to go down to Tientsin to settle it there, but this the Minister flatly refused to do, saying that he was accredited to Peking and not to any provincial official. Again a Japanese rebuffing Li and teaching him his proper place as it were! Li had no proper place, however, just then; actually no proper office where he could conveniently meet the Japanese Minister. To supply this want the Emperor ordered apartments to be prepared for him in the Tsungli Yamên, and also appointed a staff of eight secretaries and deputies to serve under him. A wooden seal containing the legend "The Seal of the Chief High Commissioner, granted plenary powers by Imperial Edict to conclude the treaty," was also given to Li, the fact of its being a wooden one implying the transitory nature of Li's "plenary powers," and suggesting that as soon as this treaty had been ratified he would be relegated to the literary sinecure provided for him in the Inner Council Chamber. It was believed by many Europeans, however, that it would not be long before the Emperor would be obliged to bring him back into full power.

Li, meanwhile, was living in a portion of a large Buddhist temple, opposite the parade ground in Gold Fish Lane, near the East Flowery Gate of the Palace, in perfect health and excellent spirits. He had an audience of the Emperor, sent for his family, called on the foreign Ministers, received return calls, and was appointed sole Commissioner to arrange the details of the Japanese Commercial Treaty. Yet the Chinese said that his career was finished and nothing now remained for him but to retire. Liu K'un-yi had, as usual, tendered his resignation several times, but he was still ordered to return to Nanking; the Viceroy Chang Chih-tung to remain in Wuchang.

In one of his audiences Li is said to have proved, documents in hand, that he had repeatedly demanded more warships, and had even made vigorous remonstrances against the niggardly policy pursued by Peking in respect of the Navy. But if so, these remonstrances must have been of a very quiet nature to have been so little heard of; and his enemies still pursued their course, preparing for the impeachment of Shang, the one remaining member of the corrupt trio. The delay about this was due to the magnitude of the preliminary investigations required and to the time necessarily consumed in collecting evidence from the several provinces in which Shang had held office. Li Ping-heng, the Governor of Shangtung, had now completed his report, and, as anticipated, it was entirely adverse to Shang.

A nephew of Li's, Chief Commissioner of the railway construction from Kaiping to Shanghai-kuan, was also in trouble, as he had been called upon by the new Viceroy to render an account of his stewardship for the last three years. The Board of Revenue alone had sent this Li six million taels, not counting the contributions from provincial authorities.

Lo Feng Luh, expectant Customs Taotai at Tientsin, ex-Naval Secretary of the Peiyang and confidential agent of the ex-Viceroy Li Hung-chang, was also denounced, a native paper stating that one of the first men to denounce him was Wen Ting-shih, Sub-Chancellor of the Grand Secretariat and late tutor of the ladies of the Imperial Household.

Things looked badly for the Li party; but it really seemed as if Li were a great magician with always some card up his sleeve, for hey presto! quick change! and Li, the discredited, was the appointed Special Envoy of the Emperor of China to congratulate his particular friend, the youthful Emperor of Russia, on his coronation at Moscow. There was a farewell banquet to Li Hung-chang in Tientsin, when the foreign community outdid itself to show the old man honour. The new Viceroy and all the great officials of the city attended.

Gordon Hall was resplendent in the beautiful embroideries

presented by Li himself on the occasion of his 70th birthday fête, and was really a thing of great beauty, the whole display resembling a dream from the Arabian Nights rather than the prosaic dining chamber, as we are told.

The Chairman of the Municipal Council proposed the health of Li, "the official with whose administration of this viceroyalty we have been long familiar; a post which you have held with conspicuous ability for twenty years; and the one Chinese nobleman and statesman most celebrated among the nations of the West, which we jointly represent. We take this opportunity of recognising with unstinted admiration the service which your Excellency has rendered to your Emperor and country in safely steering the ship of State through troubled waters and past dangerous breakers into the port of Peace. We congratulate your Excellency on the fortitude and endurance which enabled you to bring the peace negotiations to a successful issue, notwithstanding the personal danger and suffering through which you passed, and in successfully weathering the storm of public opprobrium, which is sometimes the statesman's greatest honour. (Loud applause.) We rejoice to see your Excellency, notwithstanding your advanced age, so hale in body and so cheerful in spirit. As in physical stature you stand head and shoulders above those about you, so we are conscious that in intellectual power and administrative capacity, by the signal qualities you have displayed during a long career as scholar, soldier, and statesmen, you overtower your fellow-countrymen and are among the most prominent figures in Asia. During your Excellency's régime here, you have been leader in the van of progress, and have in the face of much opposition promoted reform in China. Many projects owe their inception to you, which, though they may not as yet have accomplished their end, mark the true line along which the destiny of your country must advance. Railways, telegraphs, schools, hospitals, etc., are all evidence of your practical earnestness in promoting the good of your country, and show that, more than any living Chinaman, you appreciate and sympathise with the civilisation of the

West. Your Excellency's departure for Europe is a great historical event, which appeals strongly to the imagination, and we hope will mark a signal phase in the development of China." All this was accentuated by much cheering.

Lo Feng Luh, speaking in English on behalf of Li Hung-chang, said amongst other things:

"My feelings of apprehension of danger are overcome by the earnest desire to be useful to my sovereign and country, and to secure to them peace, the preservation of which, although perhaps contrary to the current of the time we are living in, has always been the ideal of the Chinese people and the ultimate object of the Chinese statesman."

Mr. Tsai then said, on behalf of the new Viceroy Wang:—"This grand hall suggests and recalls by its name those early services which Li Hung-chang rendered to his country, assisted by his illustrious foreign lieutenant. He has spent the strength of a long life for the public good, and now in response to the call of duty he is undertaking an arduous journey from which most men of his years would naturally shrink."

"Never had the Viceroy in the course of his long association with foreigners been so deeply affected," says the local newspaper, "and the heartiness and transparent sincerity of the whole function profoundly surprised his successor."

I think it is well worth while to reproduce these speeches, for it must be remembered that it was among the Tientsin men that Li Hung-chang had lived and gone in and out for over twenty years. They had seen him surrounded by concession hunters; they had been parties in his business transactions; they were witnesses of his conduct; and therefore, for a leading Englishman to speak thus of Li before the men who knew him best, shows that, when removed from Court intrigues, Li was at least not so completely discredited as might appear in Peking.

We now learn also that the charges brought against Lo Feng Luh had been investigated and reported baseless; and, in full possession of his rank and titles, he was then

appointed Chief Secretary of the special mission to St. Petersburg under Li Hung-chang.

Nothing would induce Li to land in Hong Kong; "plague was raging in the colony," he said, "and he did not wish the vessel put into quarantine at Singapore." He was travelling on a French steamer, which may account for this. The Russian Minister, Count Cassini, tried hard to prevent him also from taking his English doctor with him. But Li remained true to his old friend Dr. Irwin.

On April 23rd, 1896, he and his suite left Port Said on a vessel of the Russian volunteer fleet.

The steamer had been beautifully fitted for the occasion, and Li was met by the Russian Consul, as well as Prince Ouhdtomsky (who had travelled round the world with the Czarevitch) and a gentleman of the Russian Foreign Office, the two latter being sent expressly by the Foreign Office to receive the Ambassador.

A Chinese correspondent reports the arrival:—

On April 28th we arrived at Odessa. This magnificent port was *en fête;* the quays and points of observation were crowded, as also the steamers in the harbour, fifty-two in number, with visitors and inhabitants, trying to get a glimpse of the rare guests of Odessa. The Ambassador was received on reaching the landing stage by the different branches of the Imperial Administration, also the English and Japanese Consuls at Odessa. A Guard of Honour was drawn up at the landing stage formed of the 57th Regiment of Infantry with their band. The magnificent regiment received him with the usual present arms and salute, "Good health! We are pleased to serve your Excellency." The band played a welcome, and amidst enthusiastic cheers the Ambassador and suite were conducted to the fine Hotel St. Petersburg, where they were received by the officers specially appointed from the Foreign Office. The Ambassador only returned two calls, as he had many visitors to receive. In the evening the suite were entertained at dinner in the grand saloon of the hotel, and a visit was made to the circus, where a pleasant evening was passed. We left the following day at two p.m. The Ambassador was received at the railway station by all the officials I have named, who assembled to say

farewell, and the Imperial train carried us to St. Petersburg in forty-eight hours—1,043 miles. H.E. Li Hung-chang has enjoyed the voyage so far, and his health is much improved.

Li Hung-chang sent long telegrams from Russia to the Tsungli Yamên—one of two thousand words in cipher, which was not translated, as the ordinary messages were in the Yamên, but was taken home to the private residence of one of the Ministers. It was generally supposed to be concerning the Russian railway construction through Manchuria, but may have treated of even more important questions. The Chinese in Peking asserted that Li had no authority to settle anything. His mission was simply one of courtesy to Russia, and thereafter "to see Europe and America." The Germans, as he travelled through their country, exerted themselves greatly to do him honour, and showed some disappointment that he did not give big orders for guns and warships. They had no occasion, however, to complain, as one of their agents in China at this juncture secured from the Tsungli Yamên an order for the construction of some three war vessels.

From Germany Li went to the Hague, and at the Kurhaus at Scheveningen, where the Dutch Government gave him a banquet, he seems to have enjoyed himself more than anywhere else during his travels. Here he saw for the first time the Cinematograph, and was delighted with the fireworks, which included an inscription in Chinese characters, meaning "May Li Hung-chang live a thousand years." He took away with him the Visitors' Book of the Kurhaus, and in it he wrote a whole page covered with Chinese characters; the first part, of which the following is a translation, is in verse:—

"I have been a member of the Chinese Imperial Academy and Grand Secretary for more than fifty years. It has never yet been my experience to have found myself in such an earthly paradise, across the seas and oceans, as in this of Scheveningen. I have found pleasure in the music, and it was a high honour for me to read in the fireworks the good wishes for my long life that were there displayed. This I wish to

express in verse." This is followed by a passage in prose: "There are many men skilled in languages in Holland. In the course of my special visit to Europe I passed through this country. Both the officials and the people received me at a place on the coast of the North Sea. In this place there were fireworks and a concert. No greater compliment could have been paid me than to let me read in the fireworks the five Chinese characters which express the wish for my long life and prosperity in consideration of my dignity as the highest man under the Emperor. This gave me the idea of writing the foregoing verses." There is something very "childlike and bland" about this effusion, and one can see that Li was really enjoying himself there.

The excitable French seem to have taken him about too much. Everyone probably has heard how he admired the strong rooms at the Crédit Lyonnais in Paris, and how, when one of the directors handed for his inspection a stock certificate of the new Chinese loan, Li examined it with much interest, finally asking if he might be allowed to keep it as a souvenir. The director, who was obviously astonished, hastened to explain that the stock certificate belonged to a client of the bank, and Li regretfully yielded it up. But it has always been a question to my mind whether Li was really as simple as people thought. The Dowager Empress had thought it proper of late to give about ten pounds apiece to each of the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps who attended her tea party, and gifts of money are frequent in China. It has never seemed impossible to me that Li quite knew the value of the stock certificate, and thought it was a present—a nice present too! He is, of course, said to have received much larger money presents in Moscow.

Newspaper interviewers questioned him on various political subjects. On being asked whether the Chinese Government would not do something to stimulate trade between French Indo-China and the Southern Provinces of China, Li replied that nothing could be done unless the Powers would consent to an increase in the Customs tariff. He dwelt at some length on the hardship of China not

being allowed to impose more than a 5 per cent. import duty, but did not say whether one of the chief objects in making his journey through Europe and America was to persuade the Powers to let China increase the tariff, as many people think it was. Questioned as to his views on the rivalry of French and English for the trade of South China, Li replied that he desired to hold the balance evenly between the French and English. There was plenty of room for both, the English being well situated for trade in the North of Yunnan, and the French with the south-east of that province. Being bluntly asked if it was a fact that he had given numerous orders for guns and engaged military instructors in Germany, he seems to have replied very straightforwardly—"Nothing has been settled, but a great many offers have been made to me. I have discussed them and made myself acquainted with the cost. Here I shall do the same. At the end of my journey I shall compare prices and qualities, but what I shall decide to do, it is of course impossible to say."

At Lyons he expressed surprise on meeting a prefect, who had actually succeeded in retaining office for five years, adding, "M. Hanotaux, whom I saw in Paris, has been Minister for Foreign Affairs for only three months." Li improved the occasion of a grand review by mentioning that at Berlin the head of the State did not sit in a carriage, but put himself at the head of the Army and manœuvred it in his presence. Those who saw him being dragged from one function to another reported that his general appearance was one of profound boredom.

In England, amongst others Li was introduced to Lord Kelvin, to whom he put characteristic questions, opening with the polite remark, "You are the first scientific man in the world." Lord Kelvin bowed. After asking the age of his new acquaintance, in accordance with Chinese etiquette, Li asked, "How many students have passed through your hands every year?"

Lord Kelvin replied: "About 200," and the following dialogue ensued: "How long have you been Professor of Electricity and Natural Philosophy?" "For fifty years."

"Amongst the large number of students have you ever found one who promises to be as great a scientific man as yourself?" Lord Kelvin was understood to reply that it was for others to judge of that matter, but he did not try so much to turn out theoretically scientific men as practical men, who, when they left college, could render good service to mankind. "Who succeeded you as President of the Royal Society?" "Sir Joseph Lister, the first surgeon in England." "Is he the first surgeon in England?" "Yes, he made a great discovery which has now been adopted by every doctor in the world. It is not to cure a wound so much as to prevent a wound from receiving damage from the work of microbes, and leaving Nature to work its cure." With great quickness Li on this immediately said that he had not previously heard of Sir Joseph Lister, but he had benefited from his method; for once, he said, he had received a wound on the cheek from a shot fired by a would-be Japanese assassin, and a German doctor, who was in Japan, had advised him simply to wash the wound three times a day, to prevent the work of microbes. This he had done, and the wound had healed of itself. After concluding his interview with Lord Kelvin, Li adjourned to his chair, which had been placed on the deck of the steamer. Here he was surrounded by a small group of persons who, through the interpreter, explained the working of the Clyde Navigation Trust and the extent and style of the various yards. Ex-Lord Provost Ure surprised the Grand Secretary by remarking that the management of the Clyde was undertaken by men who were not paid. "Then what do they get for their trouble?" was the question Li promptly asked. "Nothing, they do it gratis." "Then," said Li Hung-chang, with a look of surprise, pointing coolly to a diamond scarf-pin which decorated the breast of the deputy chairman of the Clyde Trust, "where did that come from?"

But it was at New York that Li showed himself at his rudest, for there at a Press interview he stopped and looked around at the reporters. "Are you the best representatives

of your papers?" he asked, "Because you are very poor representatives."

Everyone has heard how, when coming away from Hawarden, he asked the railway porter how it was Mr Gladstone had not found a husband for his daughter. Curiously enough in China, where there are not such marked class distinctions as with us, a man of this kind would be likely to know all about such a matter, which, by the Chinese, would not be considered a delicate one, but merely one of arrangement. Li, however, certainly scored in his meeting with the Duke of Devonshire, when the Duke, perhaps to avoid questions like those with which Lord Tweeddale had been assailed (for Li's fame as a questioner preceded him by this time), began by asking a question himself. "I have been shooting grouse. Does your Excellency ever do that?" "No, I have never shot grouse," replied Li, in that little grumbling tone he used at times, "but I have often shot rebels."

After he got back to China, the sights that Li liked best to dilate upon of all those which he had seen in England, were the Forth Bridge, and the marvellous skill of Mr. Brock, the Crystal Palace pyrotechnist. He was very proud to be told that the display he had seen was the finest ever given in England or anywhere else; the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, which gave him the dinner at the Palace, being said to have spent £3,000 for the fireworks on the occasion. The other matters Li dilated on to his British callers were the Fleet, Lord Salisbury's fine presence, and the behaviour of our crowds. The sail down the Thames and through the Docks also profoundly impressed him. All the Viceroy's foreign callers observed a marked change in his manner of address after his grand tour through Europe. He had lost much of his old brusqueness, and was more gentle and considerate. He constantly used a walking stick of General Grant's, considerately presented to him by the latter's son in New York. Li had always had a great fondness for General Grant. And when he saw Mr. Frederick Grant in New York he said at once to him: "Are you rich? Is your

wife rich?" Then: "Do you mean to tell me that your father was a General during a rebellion that lasted five years, and brought it to a successful conclusion, and that he was then afterwards twice elected President of the United States, and that yet you his son are poor! Well! I do *not* understand how that could possibly be!"

Of course, while in England, he had not forgotten Gordon, and the English public were greatly touched by the aged Chinese dignitary proceeding to lay a wreath on the Gordon statue, whilst some people cried out on him as an old humbug, recalling the night when Gordon had sought him, revolver in hand, after the murder of the Wangs. But that was all long ago, and probably entirely forgotten by Li Hung-chang himself; as it was also forgotten by those who recalled the incident, that Gordon had afterwards so far overlooked the matter as to be willing to be friends with Li and continue to serve under him, and, indeed, had returned to China once again, content to do so had occasion served. There is every reason to believe that Li cherished a very real regard for Gordon, the man who had really won his victories and started him on his brilliant career.

We must now, however, without giving further details of a Royal progress dwelt upon at the time *ad nauseam* by both European and American newspapers, proceed to the homecoming of Li. When his steamer got over the Takubar, she met a whole host of steam launches and vessels with Chinese officials of all ranks on board. Orders were given to ignore them and go full speed ahead; but suddenly another steamer turned up with the directors and a few other foreigners on board; a hearty cheer was raised, on which Li said: "I know that greeting; it is an English cheer"; and he at once summoned the *Peiho* alongside and invited all to come on board. The Chairman expressed the general pleasure at the Viceroy's safe return, and in the name of his old friends and neighbours, the foreign residents, gave him a hearty welcome. Li responded most heartily, and remained chatting with his foreign friends on the incidents of his journey till Tangku was reached. After a quick transfer to the train,

a fine run was made to Tientsin, where an enormous crowd of officials, headed by the then Viceroy, was gathered to meet him, together with the British Municipal Councillors. supported by a large number of residents. Li shook hands with all the foreigners and then betook himself to the duties of a colossal audience with the native officials. "His remarkable vitality and spirits were the theme of universal remark. None of his oldest friends could recall him looking so fit and vigorous," was the comment at the time.

Thus let us leave him, at home in China once again, and, as it would seem, in even more than his usual health and spirits. His tour had lasted from April to October. It had been a wonderful undertaking for a man of his years, and it seemed to have been an unmitigated success.

CHAPTER XXII.

COUP DE THÉÂTRE AND COUP D'ÉTAT (1896—1899).

ALL the countries of Europe, and with them the United States, were expecting a graceful return from China for the magnificent courtesies they had heaped upon her Special Envoy, who after all had given no trade orders. For the moment, therefore, the civilised world was dumbfounded, as it was flashed round the globe by telegraph that the old man of 74 had been accused of trespassing in the grounds of the Summer Palace after an audience with the Empress, and had been sentenced to the loss of all his rank and titles in consequence! This, it seemed, was China's message of thanks to all Europe! But those who have read at all carefully this account of the many and embittered enemies Li had left behind, can understand how indignant the quasi-royal reception accorded to him must have made them, and how prompt they would naturally be to seize the first pretext that could be got hold of to degrade him. The Emperor (meaning, of course, as usual, the Dowager Empress) commuted this punishment for the loss of one year's salary; which sounds serious to English ears, but in China is a mere bagatelle, a Chinese official's salary being always too small to be worth considering. It is the bribes that are of value.

Even in China, people confidently expected next to hear that Li was very ill and had asked leave to retire to his native province. Not so Li Hung-chang! Despite his great stature he seems all through life to have been as plucky as if he had been half the size. But it must be remembered he was on the side of the Dowager Empress, and conscious of her support. Had it not been so, he might well have felt afraid, for there

had been strange things happening in China whilst he had been away.

Tze Hsi, who having raised her sister's son to the throne of China, then married him to her brother's daughter; who has since then firmly stood by her kinsman Yung-lu, of whom more anon; could yet brook no interference, even from her own family. Now, just about the time when Li was being royally received at Moscow, the Emperor's mother, Tze Hsi's sister, called upon her to remonstrate concerning the education of her son, who was kept constantly in waiting on the Empress, to the neglect of affairs of State, owing to her autocratic habits and her long residence in the Eho Park. Although, when she went to see her sister, the Emperor's mother was well, next day she was dead. The mildest version of the matter is that Tze Hsi was so indignant at the interference that she deprived her sister of her sedan chair; and the latter being thus obliged to return home in the great heat of a summer day in a common Peking cart, through the glaring sun and clouds of dust, died next day of that illness so common at the Peking Court—pent-up rage! Other versions speak of more direct means being employed. Anyway, on the one day she was well and next day she was dead!

It may have been with reference to this that Li Hung-chang sent his lengthy telegram from Moscow, although that is generally believed to have treated of matters more intrinsically important than this, or even than the Manchurian branch of the Trans-Siberian Railway. One of the best informed and most brilliant of newspaper correspondents says that while at Moscow for the Coronation festivities, he accidentally obtained positive proof that Li received then and there a very large cheque. Can it be doubted that Russia had had some special object in choosing Li—some special service she expected from him—when she selected him, at a moment when he was so discredited that his Imperial mistress could with difficulty preserve his head on his shoulders, to come on this special mission of congratulation? Evidently at that period Li was in a position which

forced him to stand by anyone that stood by him; great man though he was, he could no longer stand alone. To secure him was, of course, to secure also all the Li party of Anhui, men brilliant rather than scrupulous. The bargain was effected; and from this time we find Li, whom the English had been wont to consider their special friend, accused of being pro-Russian, and anti-English. Under all the regal splendour of the old man's tour, beneath the flashing coruscation of the festivities and the amusing oddity of Li's abrupt questions, there had been a deeper meaning hidden.

Li was next appointed to the Tsungli Yamên. The day of Tientsin was over; people had said before this that no more big contracts would be had there, but rather in Peking; and he settled down in his old Temple near the East Flowery Gate, paid visits to all the Ministers, and asked for two months' leave to recruit his health. This, however, was not granted, so he took over his seals of office on November 1st, 1896. His colleagues, however, took the opportunity to offer him a deliberate insult; since only the subordinates of the office were present to receive him.

Once in every three years there appears a list of Ministers and officers expressing the result of an examination into their official records during that time; which list is one of the means by which the Imperial Government endeavours to stimulate the emulation of all Manchu and Chinese officers of the metropolis, high and low. Whilst lauding others, all that is said of Li in the Edict of February 23rd, 1897, is: "As for Li Hung-chang, Senior Grand Secretary, we have for very many years leaned upon and confided in him, while he, on the other hand, has never shirked his duties on the score of fatigue. We hereby hand him over to the Board, for the determination of adequate rewards!"

Yet, early in May, we find Li giving the following most instructive letter quite *en grand Seigneur*, to the Rev. Gilbert Reid, an American, who had been for some years trying to start an International Institute among high-class Chinese in Peking:—

It is unfortunately true that suspicion, prejudice, and self-sufficiency are peculiar traits of educated Chinese, especially noticeable in their estimation of other countries—perhaps because of the isolation of China from Western influence for so many centuries; but whatever may be the case, the lamentable effect is seen in the present backward state of China among the nations of the world. The social, educational, and official systems of China have tended to give to the educated classes control of the destinies of the nation. Whether such a monopoly of power be good or bad need not now be considered; it exists, and the practical question is how to turn it into beneficent and useful channels. I think I may claim to have many friends in the United States where you now go. The cordial reception I met with wherever I went there made a deep impression upon my heart, and has greatly endeared your people to me. If it would interest them to know that I regard them highly and will give you a helping hand in your future efforts to bring more light into the world and encourage higher aims and aspirations, you may use for that purpose this letter from

Your friend,
(Signed) LI HUNG-CHANG,

Senior Guardian of the Heir Apparent,
Classical Reader to his Majesty the Emperor,
Senior Grand Secretary of State,
Minister of the Foreign Office, and
Earl of the First Rank.

The old man still retained his titles, but in the well-turned phrases one cannot but recognise the pleasing style of Lo Feng Luh, which robs the document of some of its interest.

In June, 1897, we find a special Russian Diplomatic Mission at Peking. According to the contemporary record, "the reception and entertainment accorded by the Chinese Emperor to his guests, the Russian Ambassadors, are said to have been worthy of the occasion, and this is the first time in the history of the present dynasty that such a recognition has been given to the special representatives of a neighbouring State. The Empress Dowager also gave the Special Russian Ambassadors, Princes Uchtomsky and Wolkonsky,

a farewell banquet at the Tsungli Yamên's Great Hall on the 2nd inst., the Princes Kung and Ching acting as hosts on behalf of the Empress Dowager. All the other Ministers of the Yamên were present except Li Hung-chang, absent on sick leave. The banquet was entirely in the foreign style."

Before arriving at Peking, Prince Uchtomsky had visited the Eastern Arsenal, some five miles distant from the foreign settlement at Tientsin, and had been specially pleased with the new Russian School, established there in 1895 *in obedience to an Imperial Decree.* The Prince presented £35 in prizes to the scholars, and £5 to the servants attached to the school; besides contributing £160 towards the establishment of a Technical School of Mines, which the Peiyang authorities intended soon to open in Tientsin.

From Peking the Mission proceeded to Vladivostock *viâ* Manchuria, the route along which all the Chinese will soon be travelling to and fro by the Russo-Manchurian Railway.

The Emperor had seen his mother killed, and his favourite concubine degraded; now he had had to entertain these Russian envoys with special favour, though doubtless he knew a little of what had passed at Moscow. Was he beginning to prove restive? Here is a most strange Imperial Decree which, it seems, must have been drawn up for someone's special edification:—

The Princess Fu Chin, the widow of the late Prince Fu Chin, has presented to us (the Empress Dowager) a memorial complaining of the headstrong, wilful, and unfilial conduct of Prince Tsai Shu, her eldest son and the heir to his father's estate. As a matter of fact, he frequently showed contempt of his mother's efforts to restrain his headstrong conduct, and of late had wilfully shown disrespect in his daily bearing towards his widowed mother. For instance, the 10th inst. was the birthday anniversary of the Princess Fu Chin. Instead of showing due filial piety by evincing an interest in or directing the proposed festivities to be held in honour of the occasion, Prince Tsai Shu pretended to fall ill the day before and asked to be excused from participating in them, thereby evading certain important ceremonies which, as the eldest son and head of the house, he should have tried by every means in his power to perform. Then,

to crown all, when our (the Empress Dowager's) birthday presents to his mother arrived at the Fu Chin Palace, Prince Tsai Shu made no attempt to appear and show his loyalty and respect for us, as well as thankfulness for this mark of Imperial bounty to his mother, by reverentially kneeling at the grand entrance of his Palace while the Imperial gifts were being borne within. Furthermore, neither did he worship at the tablets of his ancestors nor pay congratulatory obeisance before the image of his mother, which he should have done on such an occasion, even if he had been considerably more ill than he pretended to be. In a word, this audacity, this contempt for the first principles of filial piety and loyal devotion to his parent, has really gone beyond bounds; and if we do not make a most severe example of the culprit, we cannot expect to see dutiful conduct in others. Our (the Emperor's) sentence therefore, is that Tsai Shu be forthwith stripped of his princely title and handed over to the Imperial Clan Court for the administration of eighty blows of the broad bladed bamboo. *He is then to be immured for ever within the four walls of an empty room.* As for the successor of Tsai Shu, we hereby leave Princess Fu Chin herself to select the next heir to the late Prince Fu Chin and his estates.

All those who have lived in China will remember the many subsequent reports that such a room was being got ready for the Emperor himself—a living tomb in which he was to be immured. What in all the subsequent troubles did become of this Prince Tsai Shu, I have been unable to discover; whether he was killed by the Boxers or freed by the Allied Forces.

"After considerable trouble and many vexatious delays lasting several years," writes a Chinese correspondent from Peking, "a beautiful place in the Western Hills, near the Lama Temple, has at last been chosen for the site of a mausoleum for the Emperor Kwang-Hsü. The name of the spot means 'Establishing the Heir,' and the name is considered by the Board of Rites and Astronomy to be a most auspicious augury that His Majesty will be blest with an Heir Apparent*

* Be it noted this was only in 1897, yet almost at the same time reports were industriously circulated amongst foreigners as to the Emperor's incapacity to have an heir. Chinese evidently did not believe this in 1897.

in the near future. The Emperor is said to be delighted, not only with the beauty of the spot, but also with its auspicious name, and honours will fall thick upon the fortunate finder of this secluded dell in the Western hills."

The building of an Imperial mausoleum sometimes occupies a man's lifetime; hence the necessity of beginning the building of it whilst he is yet alive. Thirty years for the completion and fitting up of this Death Palace is not at all long, according to the ideas of chronology amongst the Chinese. Chin Shih-huang, the first Emperor of China (B.C. 228-209), employed a million men on his mausoleum, and it took him fifteen years to complete it. This Emperor is the one known as the Destroyer of Books.

By an Imperial Edict of August 3rd, Li was appointed Chief Examiner of the Wuying Throne Hall, the Grand Secretary of which is second in seniority among the four Grand Secretariats. Another Decree of the same date appointed Weng Tung-ho Preceptor of the Bachelors of the Hanlin Academy. The latter and Li Hung-tsao, a man simple in his habits, sterling in his character, an official of integrity and a true patriot, were the two great opponents of the Lis.

Li Hung-tsao took the gloomiest view of the future, as expressed in his speech, made shortly before his death: "Oh, what a change has come over China! For the last thirty years she has been getting weaker. The trouble is with the officials, for they have lost the confidence of the people. It is not as in former days, when we had Tsêng Kwo-fan and Tso Tsung-t'ang. It looks as if nothing could be done." This was the view that was taken at a Chinese dinner party in Shanghai, to which I had the great honour of being invited. I will not enumerate the names of the Chinese hosts and guests, for fear it might even yet get some of them deeper into trouble than they already are; but it can do no harm to say it was to meet Mr. Weng Ting-shih, late tutor to the ladies of the Imperial Household; for there is already such a heavy price set upon his head, it could hardly be heavier. It was

the saddest dinner which I hope I shall ever attend, for every man alike seemed and professed to be in despair. They indeed appeared to have invited me in their desperation as a drowning man catches at a straw, because of my known interest in setting the women of China on their feet again by doing away with foot binding.

Was it not in 1897 that a British Consul-General, Mr. Brenan, wrote the true sentence: "A long and painful experience of thwarted efforts has had such a discouraging effect on foreigners in China that a condition of stagnation has come to be accepted as in the nature of things."

If the sturdy Englishman, whose neck at least is generally protected for him by his Government, feels like this, can we wonder at the despair of the Chinese reformers? How willingly would I write a chapter or two on the wide-spread Reform movement in China, numbering in its ranks all the most promising young men of letters!

But Li Hung-chang had nothing to do with the Reform movement. It is against the interests of Russia, consequently also of her ally France, that China should be reformed; so the Diplomatic Corps at Peking has been led from the first up to the present date to cast all the weight of the Governments of Europe into the other scale, and one by one or in great companies leading reformers are being killed off. While men are thus in danger of their lives, the less said about those still living, the better. It is for the same reason that I refrain as a rule from giving the names of my authorities, when they are still living and still mixed up with affairs Chinese, unless they have themselves written a book. This is the case with Europeans also, not so much from the fear of Chinese vengeance as of persistent European thwarting, should their views be unacceptable to the powers that be.

In August there was another display of commercial fireworks. "We learn on good authority that the Jameson-Hooley Syndicate have signed a preliminary contract with the Chinese Government for a loan of sixteen million pounds, starting at 5 per cent., in consideration of which they have

been given the construction of important railway lines in the Empire." A very light and airy gentleman represented them for some time in China, and then they too disappeared from sight like the other comets.

In October, Li Hung-chang, of all men in the world, was appointed Chief Examiner of Essays. This in England we should consider shelving a statesman somewhat emphatically.

Of the 16,000 and more candidates from all parts of the Empire who gathered at Peking to compete for the M.A. degree, only seventy-three were deemed worthy of getting the coveted distinction. Among these, twenty-seven Cantonese were successful; while Kiangsu Province, of which Soochow is the capital, and which used to come out head, had only six new M.A.s, although the third name on the list belonged to a Soochow candidate, the first being from Chihli Province (Peking). Chihli thus kept her record, the first men of the previous four triennials having been invariably Chihlians. This is the more remarkable, as Northern men are as a rule reputed stupid.

Up to this time Li Hung-chang in the Tsungli Yamên had been relegated to a very low place, Prince Kung as President assuming the nominal leadership; after him, and actually directing the policy of the Foreign Office, was the Manchu Assistant Grand Secretary Yung Lu, President of the Board of War, and Commandant of the Peking Gendarmerie.

Yung Lu had been an immense favourite of the Emperor, who greatly admired his really brilliant talents. Anything that the Assistant Grand Secretary recommended to the Throne was never vetoed by the Emperor, and had it not been for this officer Li Hung-chang's name would have been more potent in the Councils. What does not seem generally realised is that Yung Lu was one of the special following of Prince Ch'un, the Emperor's father, one of his liegemen, who had known the Emperor from a baby upwards; and it is to this fact the unhappy Kwang-Hsü probably owes his life, for Yung Lu and Chang Yi, both devoted servants

of his father, would not have him touched at the subsequent *coup d'état.* I have, indeed, been assured that they threatened to head the revolution if his person were not held sacred.

Yung Lu has been described as illiterate, but he has also been depicted as "one of the most popular generals in the Imperial Army; one who loves his profession, having chosen it when a youth, although his family influence could easily have obtained for him a good position as a civil official. Yung Lu always likes to boast of being a military officer, especially whenever he is surrounded by a group of high literary graduates and civil officials. He has always been a dandy in dress, and has the reputation of being the best-dressed man in Peking, whilst the gilded youth amongst the Manchu nobility always copy his dress and swear by 'Yung Lu's style.' His horses and mules also have ever been the finest in Peking, not even excepting the Emperor's stud, and he loves to mount the most fiery and restive cattle when riding out. This has led to several picked horses sent as tribute to the Emperor from Kuldja and Mongolia, but which no one could ride owing to their untamed and restive spirit, being specially presented to him by the Emperor's command. His magnificence and lavishness make him a popular idol with high and low."

In 1897 another nail was driven into the coffin of Li's reputation, when the Germans seized Kiaochow—this term is surely technically correct, although as Dan Leno would say the Russians afterwards "took Port Arthur, and yet they did not take it, you know."

To give the German account as not likely to err in bias against Germany:—

On the 14th, at 8 a.m., a landing party was sent ashore to take possession of the heights surrounding the bay. At the same time the order was given to the *Cormoran's* landing party, she being farthest inside the bay and commanding the passes to the interior, to take the powder magazine. Towards nine o'clock, these points having been secured, the Flag Lieutenant was sent to the Chinese General with an ultimatum that within three hours he

must clear out of the camps. The soldiers were permitted within the same time to depart with their weapons and possessions. The two ships, *Kaiser* and *Prinzess Wilhelm*, were so anchored outside of the port that they commanded the forts, the order having been given to fire on the same on a given signal.

After delivery to him of the ultimatum the General withdrew as resistance, especially since his ammunition had been seized, would have been futile; the same was done by the soldiers, saving their goods and chattels as far as possible. Towards 2 p.m. the German flag was hoisted on the East Fort; the Admiral made a speech to the crews, who saluted and gave three cheers for the Kaiser. While the flag slowly ascended a salute of twenty-one guns was given by the men-of-war. The inhabitants behaved quite peaceably; in reality they were satisfied to be free from the native soldiers. The native soldiers withdrew behind the hills, and erected a camp at a distance of about five miles. The forts were then all occupied and measures taken to guard the country against plundering.

Li Hung-chang was interviewed on the subject by a *New York Herald* man, and as he saw a copy of the interview and approved it this is really interesting, and well worth the consideration of all readers, who wish to form an impartial judgment:—

The forcible occupation of Kiaochow by Germany is a direct violation of existing treaties and international law. The pretext made for this act of war was the murder of two missionaries by robbers in the interior of the province of Shangtung. The Chinese Government offered immediate and full redress for this outrage—punishment of the criminals, dismissal of the local officials, and large compensation for all losses. Anxious to avoid hostile acts, the Chinese troops were withdrawn from Kiaochow when the Germans landed, and, in spite of strong public feeling prevailing throughout the country for the defence of Chinese territory against aggression, my Government has not sent reinforcements to Kiaochow. Outlaws exist in China as in all countries. Neither treaties, law, nor religion can entirely suppress crime anywhere in the world, though they condemn and punish the criminals. There are places in every country where lawlessness abounds, and to such a place in Shantung German missionaries determined to go, knowing that

the inhabitants themselves were often victims of these bandits. Unfortunately, China has not recovered from the effects of the late war, and our country requires a period of peace to carry out the work of reform lately begun. Of late years, from instruction and observation, the Chinese have come to regard the countries of the Western world as models, and even greater in justice than in arms. Is it just to oppress us while we are struggling to emerge from the restraints of our ancient civilisation, while improvement and progress steadily continue? Should China be distressed by having her shores invaded and her territory occupied because of an occurrence which Western countries would deal with by law and not by war—an unexpected incident, deplored by my Government and followed by full redress? Our desire is to preserve our territory intact and to steadily improve it as a field open to all countries equally for the development of commerce.

Then the German Minister formulated his demands on the Tsungli Yamên under six heads:—"(1) £30,000 indemnity for two German Roman Catholic missionaries killed at Yenchou. (2) The rebuilding of the chapel destroyed in the riot. (3) The payment of Germany's expenses incurred in the occupation of Kiaochow. (4) Li Ping-heng, retiring Governor of Shangtung, to be cashiered and dismissed from the public service. (5) The severest penalties upon the murderers of the German priests and upon the local authorities where the riot took place. (6) (*a*) Germans to be given the sole right to open coal mines throughout Shangtung Province; (*b*) Special privileges to be granted to Germans in the matter of railways in the said province; and (*c*) Germany to be given the privilege of storing coal at Kiaochow in perpetuity."

And Europe, which had rejoiced in the unprovoked attack of Japan upon China, began to find this action on the part of Germany a little too much. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Peking at the same time demanded the dismissal of all British employees on the Chinese railways. He also demanded many other things, and according to Chinese report, the Russians were placed in temporary custody of Port Arthur, in accordance with the arrangement that in the event

of a disturbance of the peace in Eastern Asiatic waters, China should lend Port Arthur to Russia. So the Russian fleet entered Port Arthur in order not to be forestalled by the Germans, and the Chinese authorities consented, upon the Russian Admiral promising to return the place "after peace becomes once more settled."

H.M.S. *Daphne* had looked in to see what was doing, then H.M.S. *Immortalité* and *Iphigenia*. This had made a bad impression on the Russian Government, and Lord Salisbury made the unfortunate mistake of ordering them off, remarking afterwards (March, 1898) that, "whilst his Government had always looked with favour upon the idea of Russia obtaining a free port in the Pacific, Russia had now given a most unfortunate extension to the policy." This and Mr. Balfour's subsequent speech, free, gratis and for nothing, informing the world in general and Germany in particular that we would take no steps to connect Wei-hai-wei by railway with the rest of the world or make it a commercial success, made it impossible for anyone in the East to write with calm of these transactions.

It was then that we ceased even to complain. Of what use in face of such ignorance and wantonness in high places? Under a form of negotiation, we had taken possession of Wei-hai-wei and a bit of land we had long wanted opposite Hong Kong. The Italians then asked for San-men Bay; the French formulated their demands; only Austria, it is believed, asked for nothing. The Cassini Convention had been published to the world by Mr. R. W. Little, then indignantly contradicted, then proved by the course of subsequent events to be substantially correct in every particular. People said now there was a large cheque in the Russo-Chinese Bank at Peking waiting for Li Hung-chang's acceptance, whenever Russia should be fairly in possession of all out of which she had turned Japan. Others referred to the large amount they said had been paid over at Moscow. Others again maintained that thanks to Russia and the Dowager Empress's protection, Li Hung-chang's head had been kept on his shoulders, and that had been payment enough. The

people who know the real truth about such matters have always excellent reasons for not revealing it.

But there is one fact patent amid all that is doubtful; the Chinese had had every reason given them for wishing to be rid of all European nations together, robbers and pirates as they must have appeared to them.

At the Chinese camp at Lutai, all German drill instructors had been removed, and a Russian General placed in charge. And the Chinese had not asked for this Russian General, nor were they consulted as to making the change. He was lent by the Czar, so could receive no salary, but was to have an annual "allowance" for incidental expenses of not less than £50 per month. He was to hold equal rank with the Chinese General, and matters for reference he was to refer to the Russian Minister, receiving his own instructions from the Czar, not from Peking. Then it was that Li Hung-chang was impeached by a Censor for selling his country to Russia for a quarter of a million sterling. Even when he passed through Singapore on his tour round the world, he was believed by the Chinese there to have sold his country for gold, and was openly accused of it, so that he had to have an extra police guard given him by the British Government, so great was the indignation against him amongst the Singapore Chinese, who actually pelted him as he landed. The English head of police was nearly driven distracted by what he at the moment thought Li's indecision as to where he was going, by what road, and at what hour, leading to his having difficulty even himself in keeping close to him, while to keep the guard always near him became a sheer impossibility. Only afterwards did it occur to him that all the apparently object-less changes were the precautions Li himself felt it necessary to take, knowing the feeling against him at Singapore.

Viceroy Chang Chih-tung at the same time offered his resignation, owing to the Emperor's consenting to give the control of the salt duties and tea likin of his province of Hupeh into the hands of Sir Robert Hart, to guarantee a portion of the recent Anglo-German loan. The Yangtse Valley was reported to be arming; the Emperor had begun a

series of reforms with a long Edict dated April 11th. A memorial had been presented to the Emperor, signed by nearly twelve hundred metropolitan officials and literary graduates, begging him to use his own judgment, and citing "the fate of the traitorous Prince and Grand Secretary at the time of the re-entry of the Emperor Haien Feng into Peking after his flight from the Allied Armies of Great Britain and France to Jehol, when both men were summarily decapitated for treachery."

And yet in April we find Li accompanying a Manchu Prince to meet Prince Henry of Prussia at Tientsin. Just before this, there had been an attack upon Li's life that was very carefully hushed up. One account is that, as Li was on the point of entering the sacred precincts of the Grand Audience Hall, three hours after midnight, to have an interview with the Emperor, and was passing through the double line of Imperial Guards at the Palace Gates, a man dressed entirely in black suddenly broke through the line, and getting within striking distance of the old statesman, launched a blow at his head. Fortunately, Li had noticed the commotion made by the man breaking through the guards, and inclining his head a little aside, managed partially to evade the blow, but was not quick enough to prevent his assailant's fist from landing on his shoulder. The attack was so sudden that none of the Guards interfered until the assailant made a further attempt to trip Li up. Then it was that, just as the man's right leg was being stretched out for the purpose, a guardsman brought his naked sword with a sweep outwards and the next minute the man was overpowered and bound.

If the Emperor knew of the affair, many would have to lose both rank and position for their lack of vigilance. Li, with his usual calm, went through his audience as if nothing had happened. But one cannot help thinking there must have been more in the affair than here appears, for a man to have succeeded in concealing himself in such a place and in breaking through two lines of Guards.

The Emperor made Prince Henry some handsome gifts, including two fans painted by the Empress Dowager, who must

be extraordinarily industrious as well as gifted, if she really paints and writes all that is attributed to her. Prince Henry had interviews with both Emperor and Empress, and was received like a regular Royal Prince—the first time this honour had been accorded to anyone in China. This was in May, 1898.

In June we hear: Li Hung-chang continues to enjoy excellent health and is daily at his post in the Tsungli Yamên, the hardest working man of all the Yamên Ministers, and that the Emperor had appointed a number of officials to burn incense in order to propitiate Tien Lao-yeh (Venerable Heavenly Father) into sending rain, but still the sky remained cloudless and the rain came not. The wheat crop was ruined and the tall millet also was getting yellow and sickly. How long this latter state of things continued! And it signifies so much in China, where means of inter-communication are practically non-existent and large masses of the people are always on the verge of starvation. Old Prince Kung lay dying amid the unbroken sunshine. He was visited by both the Emperor and Empress Dowager; and when the latter saw that there was no hope, she bent over the Prince and anxiously inquired whom he would recommend as a fitting person to succeed him in the Grand Council. "Wang Wen-shao," replied the Prince without hesitation. "And whom should you recommend to take Wang Wen-shao's place at Tientsin when he comes to Peking?" again asked the Empress Dowager. There was a long pause, the Prince being evidently deep in thought. At last he slowly shook his head, as if knowing of none competent.

So Yung Lu was appointed Viceroy at Tientsin. It was then Wen Ting-shih sent a memorial strongly advising the Emperor to throw himself and the country upon the protection of Great Britain, deriding the pretended friendship of Russia, and giving a plain sketch of the whole story of the retrocession of the Liaotung peninsula by Japan. He bewailed the sad fact that everyone in China was misled by the pretensions of Russia, and wound up by saying that in the friendship of Great Britain lay the salvation of China. But Great Britain alone was indisposed to show

friendship to anyone at that juncture. To us in China she seemed dead asleep. To those in South Africa she must have seemed yet more so, for she had not wakened up to the Transvaal then.

Weng Tung-ho, the Emperor's tutor, for years the leader of the reactionary party, but of late always increasingly enlightened, and undoubtedly a man of noble aims and absolute rectitude, was now dismissed; and Li smiled grimly when asked by a foreigner how he felt when he heard that Weng, his inveterate enemy, the man who had clamoured for his head at the time of the Japanese-Chinese War, was degraded and removed. At this time the notion was common in China and foreign circles that Li's Russophile bias was only equalled by his positive Anglophobia. Curious stories were circulating in Chinese officialdom as to recent passages of arms between Li and Sir Claude Macdonald, in which pretty plain speaking was indulged in on both sides; and report said that Li often felt thankful there was a table between them, so hot at times grew the soldier-minister's indignation against him. Tientsin, however, honoured Li, and said there was no doubt but that under Yung Lu roguery was more rampant than in Li's time and corruption more widespread and barefaced.

Kang Yu Wei, a Cantonese member of the Hanlin College, had now suddenly become the Emperor's chosen adviser, recommended to him first by one of the censors, then by his former tutor, Weng Tung-ho and another equally trusted friend. Under his guidance Kwang-Hsü is said to have passed too many reform Edicts, but it would be hard for anyone to point out one which was not needed, or which was not entailed indeed by those already passed, owing to the solidarity of everything in China. Preparations were still being continued at Tientsin, where a Palace was being got ready for the projected visit of the Emperor and Dowager Empress in the autumn; and the Emperor talked of going on to Canton in a steamer. In June (1898) Li Hung-chang was appointed Inspector of the Department of Promulgated Edicts.

In July there was said to be a deal of trouble brewing in Shansi, on account of the concession to the Peking Syndicate; a determination having been expressed by the populace, inspired no doubt by the officials, not to allow the introduction of foreign machinery and plant. People wondered already what action would be taken when the time for working the concession should arrive. In December, 1902, engineers had been at work for six months, employing large numbers of men, opening mines, and building a railway, without the slightest friction arising with either officials or people; the Chinese, as usual, acquiescing in *un fait accompli.*

In September some 5,000 persons were thrown out of employment by the abolition of six minor courts, pronounced under the new régime superfluous, and Li Hung-chang was dismissed from the Tsungli Yamên, the local English paper characterising this "as a sign that a very healthy accession of firmness has characterised the British attitude in Peking." But Li was not to be beaten so easily. He and the Dowager Empress both saw there was not a moment longer to be lost. Kung Yu-wei had, indeed, been advising the Emperor secretly to shut up Tze Hsi somewhere, so that she could not interfere with affairs of Government.

Yuan Shih-hai, entrusted with the carrying out of this scheme, betrayed it to Yung Lu and either or both of them to the Empress. The Emperor warned Kang Yu-wei to fly for his life; and at the request of Kang Yu-wei and his friends, an Englishman (organising secretary of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge in China) went to the British Legation, and tried to make known the position of affairs. Sir Claude Macdonald, the Minister, was away; so were several of the Ministers; so also was Sir Robert Hart. The moment evidently had been carefully chosen. The Emperor's life was doubtless in danger. But the British Chargé d'Affaires definitely refused to be informed, saying, "If you have anything of importance to communicate to the Legation, you can do so in writing," then turned on his heel. So urgent was the danger that

Mr. Richards did write. A month afterwards he received a reply to his letter, advising him to let politics severely alone in future. The rudeness of such behaviour can only be surpassed by its want of common sense.

Meanwhile, if only because of his series of providential escapes, we must follow the fortunes of Kang Yu-wei.

Arrived at Tientsin, he found a steamer just starting and went directly on board. It was contrary to the rules of that company to take a Chinese passenger, who had no luggage, and who had not beforehand provided himself with a ticket from their office. So that steamer sailed without him, and it was well that it did so, for, in spite of flying the British flag, she was overhauled by a Chinese cruiser before arriving in Shanghai, and searched, it was said, for a fugitive escaping from justice.

Kang Yu-wei, in the next steamer, ignorant of the extremity of his danger, actually went on shore at Chefoo when she called in there. The Taotai at that place had already received orders to behead him at all hazards, but having occasion to go over to Kiaochow, the German possession, had taken his telegram with him for fear of it being made known to the intended victim. As he returned, the steamer was already moving out of sight. That was providential escape number two, but the third was yet more remarkable.

The captain had made such an uproar over the violation of the British flag that the Chinese authorities were afraid to repeat the offence; so they sent in a photograph to the British Consulate, asking for assistance in getting such a criminal off the next steamer from the North. Had they not done this, they would probably have captured Kang Yu-wei. Nothing had been heard in Shanghai of what was going on in Peking. The wires were supposed to be broken, and everyone believed everything tranquil there. But the face in the photograph was not that of a criminal. The matter got talked about. An Englishman in the end boarded the next steamer from the North with that photograph in his hand, identified the original and at once conveyed him on to

the P. & O. steamer, just about to sail for Hong Kong. H.M.S. *Este* convoyed the P. & O. steamer as long as she could, till, from want of sufficient speed, she gave up the charge to another of our ships. And when the latter also was left behind, a Chinese cruiser at once started off at full speed with what intent cannot be known, for just as she was overtaking the English passenger steamer, H.M.S. *Bonaventure* hove into sight and the Chinese cruiser put back again.

Thus, for the third time, the fugitive was saved. He was then placed in Hong Kong gaol as a measure of security. All his family had had to fly from the village near Canton during the night; for the relations of such a criminal, as he was now held to be, are put to death even to the ninth degree. His brother and five others, a Censor, a Hanlin compiler and three first-class Secretaries of the Grand Council, among them the noble Tan Tze-tung, son of the Governor of Hupeh, had all been summarily decapitated the day after he left Peking, September 28th, 1898. Fourteen eunuchs were also put to death, being the Emperor's personal attendants upon whose devotion he could count—these last in the courtyard of the Chief Eunuch's office, within the Palace grounds. The other leading Reformers escaped by hiding for a time.

A Peking dispatch reported that as soon as it became known in the capital that Kang Yu-wei had been rescued and conducted in safety by the British authorities to Hongkong, immediate orders were sent by the Empress Dowager to a General at Newchwang to concentrate eight thousand of his best troops at Shanhaikuan; to General Tung Fu-hsiang, with his Kansuh troops, numbering twelve thousand men, to concentrate near Peitaiho; to General Lo, of Tientsin, to take seven thousand troops to Taku and Peitang; and to General Mei, with eight thousand, to go to a port to the south-west of Taku, on the Gulf of Pechili. Yung Lu, who had been unable to sleep for two nights from anxiety as to what the British fleet was doing at Peitaiho, fearing that it had got wind of the projected *coup d'état*, now ordered ten thousand men into Peking, drawn from the two army corps of Yuan Shih-kai and Neih Sze-cheng, supposed to command the best

drilled troops in the Northern Army. These ten thousand were to form his personal guard, and special instructions were sent to Yuan and Nieh to pick out the best men under them, who must be prepared to obey orders arising from any emergency.

Immediately after the *coup d'état*, the Empress Dowager was anxious to reinstate Li Hung-chang in the Tsungli Yamên, but was opposed by Yung Lu, who told her that he "had heard while in Tientsin that if this was done the British fleet would seize Newchwang." Sir Claude Macdonald's vehemence seems to have had some effect. But whether Yung Lu wanted his special troops to defend himself or the Emperor did not seem quite clear. It was, moreover, a long while before anyone in China believed the Emperor was still alive. Even when a French doctor prescribed for him in November—for the Emperor was promptly reported ill, and has been reported ill ever since—some people maintained that it was a mock Emperor the doctor saw. There seems to be little doubt that it was the intention of the Manchus to kill Kwang-Hsü; but the attitude of the foreign Legations, as also probably that of Yung Lu at the head of his troops, made them pause for a while.

In November, General Tung Yu-hsiang, Commander-in-Chief of the Kansuh Army Corps, had an audience of the Empress Dowager, and begged permission to lead his battalions against the foreign Legation guards, as a preliminary to a declaration of war against all Europe, guaranteeing that he and his Kansuh men could drive all foreigners coming to China into the sea again.

Li Hung-chang had been, to the surprise of everyone, ordered off to repress the Yellow River. The Empress had sent for Li, after reading the distressing memorials of the Governor of Shangtung, and had a long talk with him—the first private audience he is known to have had since 1895. Li pleaded age and infirmity in vain, then wired to the Chinese Ministers in Washington and London to secure all information possible in regard to the Mississippi, Nile, Ganges and Irawaddy, and started on December 6th with a

large staff of deputies—a very old man to undertake such a journey in the bitter winter weather of North China. General Tcheng Ki-tong, of Paris notoriety, was attached to his staff. Li's nomination was pretty generally put down to the wish to get him out of Peking, rather than to the urgency of the floods.

More eunuchs were being punished; more Reform leaders terrified for their lives. Several of them telegraphed to the same Mr. Richards who had been powerless to save the Emperor, begging him to secure England's protection for them. He was sitting, sadly thinking how useless it was for him to appeal to the British Legation, when in came the same *Times* correspondent who had gone to meet Kang Yu-wei. "Oh, give me that telegram," he said. "Well! very likely that is the best thing I can do with it," replied Mr. Richards mournfully. The other at once sent on the telegram to the *Times*. Next day came an inquiry from the Foreign Office to the British Minister: "Who are these Chinese Reformers who are applying for Great Britain's protection?" No one knew at the Legation, so the question was sent on to the Consul-General in Shanghai. He did not know either, but he knew who would know, and sent at once for Mr. Richards. Thus these young men's lives were for the time saved by British intervention, only obtained after a rather unnecessarily circuitous fashion.

Suddenly, in February ('99), Li was ordered to return post haste to the capital. On January 26th, the Princes of the Blood Royal had brought their children together to the Palace, and discussed the question of raising one of them to the throne in succession to the Emperor.

Li's return may, however, have had nothing to do with this matter. For the Dowager Empress was investigating charges of extravagance against the Governor of Shangtung. When Li was appointed Imperial High Commissioner of the River Conservancy, the reception given him by the accused Governor had been extravagant in the extreme; every luxury, even extraordinarily rich and expensive furniture and utensils, being placed at the disposal of the

Commissioner and of his numerous staff, while no less than £200 a day had been spent since their arrival at Chinanfu, the provincial capital, in entertaining the party. In addition to this, the more important members of Li's numerous staff had been presented with sums of money for "boarding expenses," "insomuch," remarks the accuser, a Hanlin Reader, "that all of Li Hung-chang's staff had all their desires fulfilled." From the day of Li's arrival, the charge is that "not a single one passed but feasting and gaiety of some sort on an extravagant scale took place." In regard to the above extravagance, Li was taken to task and asked by the Empress Dowager why, upon experiencing all this, he did not stop it on the spot and denounce his host to the Throne instead of accepting these luxuries. But this also was explained to the Empress's satisfaction, although Dr. Fryer, long in Chinese employ, and at that time lecturer at the University of California, then characterised Li as "an extinct volcano, a traitor to his word, a secret opponent of foreign civilising influences, and a Royal favourite simply because of one timely act of military strategy whereby he aided the Empress Dowager."

Li sent in his report with regard to the Yellow River, in which "a permanent control" plan and a "temporary relief" plan were embodied—the first to cost six millions sterling and the latter half that sum. He then presented a memorial resigning his post in Peking and praying that he might be permitted to return to his native city there to pass the remainder of his days. It is reported that the Empress Dowager was favourable to granting Li's prayers, but no Edict appeared on the subject. Just then great secrecy was being observed in the meetings of the Grand Council, presided over by the Empress Dowager, who was assisted by Yung Lu; every outsider, eunuchs and all, being ordered out of earshot during the deliberations.

It was then that Li Hung-chang strongly recommended the appointment of the new Governor of Shangtung, Yu Hsien—one shudders as one reads the name now—to the Superintendency of the Works for the Control of the Yellow

River. The newspaper comment is: "There is, therefore, little chance that anything effective will be done, unless the Foreign Ministers urge the Tsungli Yamên to vote for the employment of Western methods."

We read of Li after this in good health, happy at home, expressing the greatest confidence in the Peking Syndicate, and wiring for 4,080 scrips; Kang Yi, by whose advice the six young reformers were executed without trial, was on the Yangste inquiring into Yu Hsien's twenty-three charges of misconduct against the Viceroy, Liu K'un-yi, and eight of his Taotais. The late Viceroy of Szechuan, the originator of the Szechuan riots, dismissed for ever from office in accordance with the demands of the British Government, had been specially invited by the Empress Dowager to come to Peking.

At this juncture, when Great Britain and Russia had just made an agreement of a somewhat vague nature about affairs in China, a Peking correspondent reports an interesting conversation between an Englishman of high position and Li Hung-chang.

Li Hung-chang remarked that he was unable to see in the Anglo-Russian Convention any evidence of England's boasted friendship for China. "You are to do as you like in the south without hindrance from Russia, Russia is to follow its sweet will in the north without protest from England. Is this any strong indication of great friendship for China? Between you, two-thirds of our country are to be absorbed, and yet you assert 'England is China's best friend.' I must say I fail to see it."

Explanation was not easy, but the statement was made that even in this England was really China's friend, "for without this convention Russian aggression would have been more rapid, and China's dismemberment would have been hastened. Unable to hinder the Russian advance, England has endeavoured to delay and limit it. What more could we have done under the circumstances?"

"I cannot say," said Li; "but the results are all to be advantageous to you, and disadvantageous to us. Your

explanation leaves the matter exactly in the position I maintained would be the case. After all, you and Russia are eventually to obtain two-thirds of the Chinese Empire, and we are to lose it. How can I possibly see in this any evidence of England's goodwill towards us?"

Surely most of us must agree with Li; explanation certainly was not easy.

And as an indication as to who really ruled in Peking, a Manchu, designed for the office of Customs Taotai, at Tientsin, on finding that he should be expected to pay the Empress's favourite eunuchs about 30,000 taels in addition to the usual fee of 6,000 taels, bluntly told the Empress of the extortion; whereupon she simply ignored the accusation, saying that she would instead appoint him to a Provincial Judgeship on the next vacancy, as perhaps that would suit him better.

And through all this Tung Fu Siang's cavalry rode on "at a slow trot, in compact companies of fifty; with waving of silk banners and fluttering of scarlet cloaks and long red-tufted lances quivering in their hands like reeds, they swept through the quiet country lanes in a way that for once recalled some of the pomp and circumstance of war. It would seem that they are so conscious of their strength, and their power to crush the foreigners, when the word is given, that they look on them more with pitying contempt than with active dislike. After a peasant has gone to his fields at dawn and returned home at night for a month together to this sort of music, he begins to have a pretty clear conception that something unusual is under way; and that if the Empress Dowager has undertaken the overturning of the whole Imperial policy towards foreigners, she has taken good care to gather troops enough to ensure the complete success of her policy, however ruthless. And that it will be ruthless is the conclusion that the entire countryside has drawn from this two months' cannonade. Everywhere, both in city and country, we hear the same tale, that all the foreigners are to be killed or driven out, and that our day is close at hand. These remarks are seldom made to us

personally—though they have been so made to our faces here in the streets of Tungchou—but the ears of native helpers and converts are filled with them. For the most part, the feeling of unrest and expectancy on the part of the Chinese is unaccompanied by any sentiment of hatred towards us, such as prevailed at the time of the kidnapping rumours a year or more ago, but merely includes the dispassionate though agreeable conviction that our lives are drawing to a close."

Thus, towards the close of December, 1898, wrote a Tungchou correspondent to the Shanghai paper; and we all read it, and some of us—thought a good deal.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BOXER OUTBREAK (1899—1900).

Li Hung-chang, in the course of his Progress, gave out that he did not come to give trade orders. Lord Charles Beresford, on the other hand, announced that he came to China as a commercial traveller, was equally received *en Prince*, and yet seems to have made speeches quite as rude, if not ruder than those of Li. At Wuchang, in conversation with the most literary and learned Viceroy Chang Chih-tung, he actually said bluntly: "Of course, we could take the Yangtse Valley, you know," whilst men conversant with Chinese notions of courtesy shuddered, as the tiny Chinese dignitary, with haughty composure, said quietly: "Oh, of course," and then adroitly, but firmly, turned the conversation. Only the legacy of bitterness and distrust left behind shows the impression Lord Charles produced both at Wuchang and at Nanking. There, Liu K'un-yi had already a French Admiral tackling him about an addition to the French concession at Shanghai. Lord Charles had promised beforehand to abstain from touching upon the subject, yet he plunged deep into it at once. At Tientsin he went still further, for he actually proposed to the Viceroy Yuan Shih-kai that he should march upon Peking and seize the person of the Dowager Empress, adding that then he would himself go along with him. Then, when this speech became known, he was astonished: "I never saw such a funny place as China. There was no one present but Yuan Shih-kai, my secretary and myself. Who can have told?" "Why, the Viceroy, of course. Do you not see that it was high treason you were talking? If it became known that he had

heard it and said nothing, he would have been beheaded, so, of course, he told it at once to make himself safe."

Since it was understood that Lord Charles was a specially accredited Envoy of the British Sovereign—for he accepted all the honours that would naturally be accorded to a man in such a position—it may be better imagined than described what a rankling memory the professedly "commercial traveller," who yet did no business, left behind him in China. Then came his book, the book of England's Special Envoy, entitled "The Break-up of China," freely translated into Chinese of course, and widely circulated. Yet, even after that, people continued in a fatuous fashion to distinguish Chinese officials as anti-foreigner, anti-English and pro-Russian. Every man's hand being outstretched against China, how could it be otherwise but that the Chinese were against *all* foreign nations—only obliged to side, now with this one, now with that one, as a protection against the others?

It was noted at this time that Li had a mysterious interview of over an hour's duration with the Russian Minister in July, 1899.

It was in this year that round-faced Li Han-chang, Li's elder brother, died at the ancestral home in Anhui Province, at eighty years of age, from cancer, all his sons, nephews, grandsons, grand-nephews and great-grand-nephews assembling at Hofei to pay him the last respects, as in 1902 they were doing again in Li Hung-chang's honour.

Li had been before that excused from attending at the Tsungli Yamên, and given the privilege of a two-bearer chair within the Palace gates. He was now appointed President of the Court of Last Appeal for men under sentence of death. It seems as if in turn this indefatigable old man must hold every appointment there was to be had; and could any be more appropriate for an aged man than this?

Already, a month earlier, the now too notorious Yu Hsien, who in history must surely rank along with Nana Sahib, was recommending that all Chinese Christians should be compelled to dress like the Europeans, whose creed they had adopted, so that in the event of a riot, the officials might at once be able to

distinguish them. Moreover, Kang-yi, called by Chinese the Lord High Extortioner, had been sent on his journey of oppression through the Yangtse Provinces to extort as much money as possible for the Dowager Empress's needs. Whilst doing so, one of his first acts had been to close the Girls' School, that had but lately been opened with great *éclat* at Shanghai by King Lien-shan, the head of the Telegraphs there, a remarkable old Cantonese, stone deaf, and yet of enlightened views and with the courage of his opinions. Kan-yi's attitude is expressed by his remark on another occasion: "I cannot understand why people of late enjoy opening schools. These schools educate a number of men who, as soon as they know a little about Western affairs and have learned a few sentences in the Western language, forthwith desire to turn traitors, while crafty and cunning merchants show great fondness for assisting these schools with funds. I must say that I feel deep indignation at such conduct." From this point of view, we can appreciate his opinion on the subject of army discipline: "I see that of late the Commandants of Regiments have all taken to drilling their men after the foreign methods. This is a truly pernicious habit. They throw aside the sword, spear and shield, and talk of nothing but keeping their men in step and in proper line. They have made a great mistake, which they will by-and-by find out to their cost. Now in fighting, headlong dash and courage win the battle. How can one show this dash, then, by keeping in step and in line with his fellows? Why, this kind of drilling is simply learning to lose instead of to win a battle."

People began to notice that the rival Generals were massing their forces round Peking, that the Eunuch Guard was being armed, and that there were many dark reports as to strong-rooms the Empress was having made in the palace; some said for her own safety in case of the worst; others, for confining the Emperor—who was still a prisoner on a fairy-like island in the middle of a large lake, a tangle of exquisite pagodas, lovely Chinese pavilions with curving roofs of glittering, golden yellow porcelain, fantastic summer-houses, petrified trees, and beautiful throughout; a place in which the

heart might grow sick with longing, looking at the great palace roofs in the distance, with their buoyantly upcurved ends, signifying to the prisoner on the island the power he had never held, the freedom he might never regain.

According to a Chinese report, one night, one plank of the drawbridge connecting the island with the shore by a long causeway was left down by a combination of treachery and friendship; the Emperor, with some adherents, was about to cross it and escape, when up rushed guards and eunuchs, who, though none dared to lay a hand upon him, entreated him with tears, saying: "That way for you lies freedom, but you know that then to-morrow all our heads would be cut off." Kwang-Hsü looked at them with those dark, mournful eyes, the intense sorrow in which has caused even hardened Legation Secretaries to write pathetic descriptions after State audiences, looked at them, knew what they said was true, and went back to the pavilion assigned to him, a voluntary prisoner.

A mass of books was about this time obtained for the Emperor from the office of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge in China. He had already learnt to speak English fairly well, as his former instructor, now Chinese Minister in England, told me; and he was full of the idea of qualifying himself better for the great post which he still believed he was yet eventually to hold. Since then, it has become almost a race question whether the Chinese Emperor is still competent to rule or not. Frenchmen and Russians say he is *abruti—un homme fini*; whilst Englishmen, and yet more, Chinese, will tell you he is a man of remarkable intelligence, not even sick, except that he overtaxes his strength by studying and working too hard. Of all the newspaper correspondents who witnessed the return to Peking, it was reserved for a Japanese alone to see the Emperor in earnest and animated conversation with the gentlemen of his suite. Whilst Roman Catholic missionaries say he has been so maltreated as henceforth to be incapable of anything, Protestant missionaries believe very largely that he is almost, if not altogether, a Christian, and

still hope great things of a man who, at all events, knows how to keep silent.

At this time the Empress wished to appoint Li to his old post at Tientsin, but Yung Lu—hated of Kang-yi, the man of many dislikes, as "a little boy who will soon be glad to come home and play with his bow and arrows again"—could not make up his mind to give up the command of the Peiyang land forces. Meanwhile, the ever-increasing number of Chinese — not Manchu — memorials deprecating the deposition of the Emperor, made the Empress pause, although she still thought it well to get rid of Li, for the time, by appointing him Investigating Commissioner of Commercial Matters in the Treaty ports, a novel and anomalous appointment. Li was only thankful to get out of Peking. I remember vividly how people, who met him at the time, spoke always of his almost boyish joy at getting away!

In December, 1899, he was made Viceroy of Canton. Was this appointment made in view of something projected at Peking, in order to hold the fierce Cantonese in check? for no one could keep a province in order so well as Li. Or was it simply done to get him away? For Li's European friends all declare there would have been no Boxer rising had Li remained at his old post as Viceroy of Chihli.

It was generally believed that before the Chinese New Year, which comes a little later than ours, another *coup* was to come off. Some months earlier the compilers of the Imperial Almanac had been instructed to leave the name of the Emperor blank for the present; the Imperial Commissioner of silk looms at Soo-chow had received orders to make in all haste sixteen court robes similar to those worn by the Emperor, and evidently not intended for the child, Prince Tuan's son, whose imminent proclamation as heir-apparent was being openly announced; and at a certain Council all high officials were ordered to come with their sceptres as is only usual on the occasion of the proclamation of an Emperor. There were, indeed, rumours of all kinds, of which the most general was that Kwang-Hsü

was to be made away with, and on January 24th, 1900, he "was forced to sign his abdication." This is the account given by a Chinese present:—

I was one of those who stood by with ink slab and pen for the Emperor to use, while the Empress Dowager herself held out the pen to him. Even then his Majesty hesitated to take it and sign the already prepared "Imperial" decree of abdication held out to him; but an imperious stamp of the right foot and those piercing, menacing eyes of the Empress Dowager frowning upon him, seemed to enthral and fascinate the Emperor, who immediately stretched forth a trembling hand, and the next moment, with a groan and a gesture of despair, as it were, the fatal deed was done, and the Empress Dowager had triumphantly snatched the "Decree" from her nephew's hand. Then a sudden change occurred, which those around her were too accustomed to see to be startled or astonished at. The Empress Dowager's face became instantly suffused with smiles, her eyes became soft and benevolent, and she was all kindness and motherly solicitude for her Imperial nephew! He, poor fallen Majesty, had sunken down on his chair after signing the fatal paper, while a sudden deadly paleness manifested itself on his countenance, and a moment afterwards he had dyed his robe and the carpet beneath him with his life's blood. His Majesty's excitement had been too much for his weak health, and it seemed that he had burst one of his lesser blood-vessels. Very kindly and gently the Empress Dowager herself attended to the Emperor, and, when he seemed to have somewhat recovered himself, herself supporting him on one side, waving away the eunuch who had come forward to do so, and with a surpassing solicitude for his health and comfort, arranged the pillows and cushions in the sedan chair which was to carry him back to his usual prison—the water-surrounded kiosk at the Southern Lake Palace, very near the Empress Dowager's own residence of Eho Park. She herself escorted the Emperor to his place of retreat, and having seen him securely confined within and the drawbridge once more brought over, her face resumed that hard, inscrutable look usual to it, as she and her numerous retinue returned to her palace. All the way to his prison I heard the Emperor weeping.

In December, 1899, a circular despatch had been sent out by Tze Hsi to all Viceroys and Governors of the Maritime and

Yangtse Provinces. At the time it hardly read as if it could be genuine. In the light of subsequent events, it seems wonderfully explicit, and is quite worth carefully considering even now:

As the Italians have not had their ambitions gratified with respect to the cession of Senmen Bay to them, it is apprehended that they may try to seek opportunities for seizing other portions of our coast. Moreover, the arbitrary and aggressive actions of the French at Kuangchouwan [since then annexed by France], where they are stirring up disturbances in order to obtain further pretexts for demanding concessions from the Imperial Government, may lead to actual hostilities between China and France. It behoves us, therefore, to exercise the utmost vigilance and watchfulness to guard against sudden aggression and to be always prepared to resist an enemy. Your Excellency is, therefore, urged to enjoin all this upon the Generals and Commanders of troops garrisoning important points within your jurisdiction, and not only this, but to be prepared also to give aid to your brother Viceroys and Governors whose territories adjoin your own. It has been an evil practice among the high provincial authorities to consider that the duty of any one of them lies only in guarding safely the region lying within his own jurisdiction, ignoring the crisis that may be taking place in the adjoining provinces, forgetting that, his neighbours being overcome, his turn for overthrow becomes a near possibility. This lack of union is lamentable, but it must not be continued from this date. This Yamên has received the special commands of her Imperial Majesty the Empress Dowager and H.I.M. the Emperor to grant you full power and liberty to resist by force of arms all aggressions upon your several jurisdictions, proclaiming a state of war, if necessary, without first asking for instructions from Peking, for this loss of time may be fatal to your security and may enable the enemy to make good his footing against your forces. Finally, your Excellency will be held responsible for any repetition of indecision or too great trustfulness in the declarations of an encroaching enemy, such as happened, for instance, to General Chang Kho-yuan in Shangtung. (This General was in command of the Tsingtao forts when the German fleet seized Kiaochow Bay.)

Another secret Edict issued on her own initiative on

November 21st, 1899, is almost more striking in its concluding sentences:—

It is our special command, therefore, that should any high official find himself so hard pressed by circumstances that nothing short of a war would settle matters, he is expected to set himself resolutely to work out his duty to the end. Or, perhaps, it would be that war has already actually been declared; under such circumstances, there is no possible chance of the Imperial Government consenting to an immediate conference for the restoration of peace. It behoves, therefore, that our Viceroys, Governors and Commanders-in-Chief throughout the whole Empire unite forces and act together without distinction or particularising of jurisdiction, so as to present a combined front to the enemy, exhorting and encouraging their officers and soldiers in person to fight for the preservation of their homes and native soil from the encroaching footsteps of the foreign aggressor. Never should the word peace fall from the mouths of our high officials, nor should they ever allow it to rest for a moment within their breasts. With such a country as ours, with her vast area, stretching out several tens of thousands of miles, her immense natural resources and her hundreds of millions of inhabitants, if only each and all of you would prove his loyalty to his Emperor and his love of country, what, indeed, is there to fear from any invader? Let no one think of making peace, but let each strive to preserve from destruction and spoilation his ancestral home and graves from the ruthless hands of the invader. Let these, our words, be made known to each and all within our domains.

Therefore, when the Russian Government once again formally offered to undertake the suppression of the Boxer rebellion and the restoration of order in the North of China, it is not unnatural that their offer was refused. The Russians, it will be remembered, had previously offered to repress the Taiping rebellion. They subsequently saved Tientsin, Captain Baily, R.N., in command there, "particularly desiring to make this known." They claim also, and possibly with justice, that they saved Admiral Seymour's column after it had started counter to their wishes and contrary to their advice; their Intelligence Department,

unlike our own, being perfectly well aware that the Imperial Army and the Boxers were one body with one soul.

It is not for me here to give an account of the terrible massacres, the noble heroisms, the saintly martyrdoms of the year 1900 in China—a year when so many of us forgot how to smile; for that I must refer the reader to the many volumes already written on the subject, borrowing from the Rev. Arthur Smith's "China in Convulsion" his description of the Boxer method of initiation. It was, perhaps, a misfortune that the name of the League of Righteous Harmony was from the first Anglicised as Boxers—the word for League also meaning Fist, and "Fists and Feet" being the Chinese name for Boxing—for the use of this derisive name conduced much towards the Society's growing without much notice being taken of it. It began as a Sword Society in Shangtung, Yu Hsien's Province. On account of Yu Hsien's marked hostility to foreigners, the Germans objected to his presence there as an official. Whereupon he was summoned to Peking, received "the character happiness or good-luck," written in the Empress's own hand, and was appointed to Shansi, which was full of English missionaries. Well do I remember my thrill of indignation on finding that the British Minister had offered no opposition to this appointment, that the British Government tolerated it. Evidently at home they had no thought to spare for us. Yet, even at Tientsin, people played about on their recreation ground while the Boxers were going through their drill alongside, without ever pausing from their play to notice what the others were doing, until they found themselves fleeing before them to take refuge in the Gordon Hall.

This is one form of Boxer drill: "With the two hands fix the magic fingers, the feet upon a cross (marked on the ground) facing east, read a certain charm three times, touch the ground with head three times, again read the same charm thrice in succession; in one hundred days will practice be to perfection. Note.—Unless you desist from meat, do not bathe, and truly preserve a respectful heart while reading the above, it will be ineffectual—this is

exceedingly important." And then again: "Bow once and knock the head to the north-east—read the following once—again three times and bow and knock head, shut the eyes, stand on two feet together—use charm with thumb, saying 'Invite southern O-mi-to Fu.' Do as before—use charm with first finger, say 'Strike Heaven, the heaven gate opens, strike Earth, the earth gate approaches. I desire to learn of the Divine Boxers, and invite the Genie Teacher to come,' follow with the Yuan Wu charm, one bow to the south and read once, one step one bow, one reading, another step then bows, one reading, another step, shut eyes, two feet stand together."

Red Lantern girls were carried in front of the Boxers, who believed they were invulnerable, and the Boxer Lord of Wealth and Happiness issued the following manifesto, the beginning of which recalls "Everyman," the oldest morality play in Europe:—

The condition of the Yamêns is unspeakable. In every market and in every guild nothing can be done unless money is spent. The officials must be bribed. Having forfeited their heaven-derived disposition they are unreasonable and unregulated. They are all alike—ill-gotten wealth is their one object. There is no one to whom the aggrieved may appeal; the simple multitudes are killed with oppression, and their cry goes to Heaven itself and is heard of God. Though spiritual beings and sages were sent down to teach right principles, to issue good books, and to instruct the multitude, few, alas! heeded. Who is there that understands? . . . Now in anger the Heavenly powers are sending down multitudes of spirits to earth to make inquiry of all, both high and low. The Emperor himself, the chief offender, has had his succession cut off, and is childless. The whole court, both civil and military, is in an unspeakable condition. They indulge blindly in mere amusement, and disregard the cry of the widow, repenting of nothing and learning nothing good.

Great calamities still have overtaken the nation. Foreign devils come with their teaching, and converts to Christianity, Roman Catholic and Protestant, have become numerous. These churches are without human relations, but being most cunning have attracted all the greedy and covetous as converts and to an unlimited degree

they have practised oppression, until every good official has been corrupted, and, covetous of foreign wealth, has become their servant. So telegraphs have been established, foreign rifles and guns have been manufactured, and machine shops have been a delight to their evil nature. Locomotives, balloons, electric lamps, the foreign devils think excellent. Though these foreigners ride in sedans, unbefitting their rank, China yet regards them as barbarians of whom God disapproves, and he is sending spirits and genii for their destruction, the Light of the Red Lamp and the Volunteer Associated Fists—the purpose of Heaven is fixed; a clear sweep is to be made.

Thus they, too, began as reformers.

The Yangtse Viceroys sent up a protest against the crowning of a new Emperor; forty-six protests of the kind came in, sometimes a dozen in a day, but the first was a telegram headed with the name of Mr. King Lien-shan, the stone-deaf chief of the Telegraphs and founder of the Girls' Schools in Shanghai.

"*February 7th*, 1900.

"Telegram to the Princes and Ministers of the Tsungli Yamên:

"When we received the Edict of the 24th inst., in which the Emperor proposed to abdicate on account of illness, we were amazed, and the mandarins, gentry and merchants from all the provinces residing in Shanghai became full of anxiety and discussed the matter everywhere in the streets. We therefore wire to you to beg you to be loyal and faithful, and on behalf of the nation to implore the Emperor not to think of abdicating, though he should be unwell, so that the Empress Dowager at her advanced age may not have the extra burden of ruling a distracted Empire, and so that the spirits of our ancestors may be at rest and the people live in peace."

This was signed by 1,231 officials and Literati, and must be pronounced an exceedingly well worded telegram; but the rage of the Empress, who had already despatched twenty-six men to Hong Kong and elsewhere to capture Kan Yu-wei or assassinate him on the spot, if more convenient, was now such that the eunuchs and even the Prince of Li, who brought the telegram, were simply terrified, and trembled

lest her anger should fall on anyone present. "Who dare send such a telegram?" at last came her question. "Very well! we'll show them how we deal with traitors who cross our path." Li Hung-chang was thereupon ordered to search heaven and earth to find Mr. King, for almost at once the Telegraph Manager had disappeared. Mr. King was ultimately discovered at Macao, and lodged for safety by the Portuguese authorities in a fortress prison, from which he did not emerge till the close of 1901.

I never knew whether I did not really owe my long interview with Li, the only interview ever accorded by a Chinese Viceroy to a foreign lady, in some measure to this order; for in the midst of a most animated and charming conversation, the grand-looking old man leant across the table and looking me right in the eyes, said: "Mr. King Lien-shan is a member of your Anti-footbinding Society?" "No-o-o," I replied, "warmly interested in the movement, I believe, but not a member of our society." "I am told he is quite a leading member of it," shouted Li, almost putting his face into mine. "Indeed, your Excellency has been wrongly informed. All our committee and officials are foreigners. We are particularly anxious to be identified with no political party. And, indeed, Mr. King has never even contributed one penny to our society." Then when the Viceroy had assured himself that I did not know where Mr. King was, by perceiving, I presume, no guilty tremor in my countenance, even under such close inspection, the conversation continued as before; and I have ever since maintained that the great Viceroy Li was the most entertaining man I have ever talked with. He asked me none of the rude questions for which he is famous, but simply joked and laughed from the beginning to the end of the interview. His sympathy with the anti-footbinding movement, the ostensible subject of our conversation, did not, however, strike me as particularly warm.

At this time, it required two attendants to lift him out of his chair in order to get him to his writing table; the weakness of his legs, as his son Lord Li informed me, being his only infirmity. He certainly was a magnificent figure as

he received us—for, naturally, I did not go alone—his long gown even adding to his height, his eyes still piercing, and his hearing evidently still quite acute; while his power of repartee and badinage was something extraordinary for an old man of any nationality, and yet more so when one considers that conversation had to be carried on through interpreters.

My recollection of this interview has naturally somewhat coloured all these pages, for as I write of him, I cannot but recall the great Li's geniality, how absolutely natural and unaffected he was, the good-natured, grumbling tone in which he said, "No-o! I don't like to hear little children cry; but then, you see, I never do hear them." The indignation with which he said, "I don't like to see bones, whether they are Chinese women's bones or foreign women's," when I presented him with a Röntgen Ray photograph of Chinese and European women's feet—a speech his interpreters, under the circumstances, thought too rude to translate. I was much impressed, too, by the way in which he kept us both waiting, and himself also, that my friend might herself take away intact his gift to her hospital (as I have related in an earlier chapter); by the haughty tone in which he said that all the women of the Li family have always had their feet bound; and by the way in which his face softened as, looking back across the years, he said: "My mother only let out her feet when she was quite an old lady."

He must have been overwhelmed with business at the time, and yet talked and laughed as if he had not a care. Shortly before I saw him there had been another attempt upon his life, but the explosion had occurred a little too soon, just before he had entered a certain temple, and so this third and last time he escaped unhurt.

In May a Shanghai paper published a letter from its Chinese correspondent in Peking, who is believed to have been killed afterwards during the siege. All of us in China had the opportunity of reading it, but, of course, long before that many of us had realised that a great many people were going to be killed that summer in China. This, however, is what we read:—

I write in all seriousness and sincerity to inform you that there is a great secret scheme, having for its aim to crush all foreigners in China and wrest back the territories "leased" to them. The chief leaders of this movement are the Empress Dowager, Prince Ching, Prince Tuan (the heir apparent's father), Kang Yi, Chao Shu-ch'iao, and Li Ping-heng. The forces to be used to achieve this end are all Manchus—viz. the Peking Field Force (50,000 men), under Prince Ching; the Hushung Corps or "Glorified Tigers" (10,000 strong), under Prince Tuan; and the various banner corps of the Imperial Guards (aggregating 12,000 men), under Kang Wi and others. These 72,000 men are to form the nucleus of the "Army of Avengers," whilst the Boxers are to be counted upon as Auxiliaries in the great fight that is more imminent than foreigners in Peking or elsewhere dream. All Chinese of the upper classes know this, and those who count foreigners amongst their friends have warned them, but have to my own knowledge been rather laughed at for their pains than thanked for feeling any anxiety on their Western friends' behalf. May I be more fortunate in warning you! The foreign Ministers, I know, have protested to the Tsungli Yamên about the increase of the Boxer organisations in the northern provinces, but dust has as usual been thrown into these foreigners' eyes. Not only have the Boxers increased tenfold in numbers since the beginning of the year in Shangtung and Chihli, but even the Imperial Prefecture of Shuntien (Peking) and the three north-eastern provinces (Manchuria) are now filled with the ramifications of this dangerous society. I will give this time only two instances to show the high favour in which the Boxers stand in the eyes of the Powers that be in Peking.

In the first place, a Censor named Wang, a native of Chihli, had recently an audience of the Empress Dowager. The subject of the Boxers having come up, the Empress Dowager said to the Censor, "You are a native of this province, and so ought to know. What do you think of the Boxers in Chihli? Do you think that when the time comes for action they will really join the troops in fighting the foreign 'devils'?" "I am certain of it, your Majesty. Moreover, tenets taught the members of the society are, 'protect to the death the Heavenly dynasty and death to the devils.' For your servant's own part, so deeply do I believe in the destiny of the society to crush the 'devils' that young and old of your servant's family are now practising the incantations of the Boxers, everyone of us having

joined the society, to protect the Heavenly dynasty and drive the foreign devils into the sea.' Had I the power given me I would willingly lead the Boxers in the van of the avenging army when the time comes, and before that time do all I can to assist them in organising an army." The Empress Dowager nodded her head in approval, and, after ruminating in her mind, cried, "Ay! It is a grand society! But I am afraid that, having no experienced men at their head just now, these Boxers will act rashly and get the Government into trouble with these 'Wang-kuei-tse' (foreign devils) before everything is ready." Then, after another pause, "That's it. These Boxers must have some responsible men in Chihli and Shantung to guide their conduct;" and the audience then ended.

The next morning a Decree was issued naming this Censor, Wang, Governor of Peking. That is to say, a sixth grade official was by a stroke of the pen raised to a fourth grade metropolitan post—a sub-prefect to a provincial judgeship! Wang will, therefore, have the opportunity he wishes—namely, to organise, advise, and arm his friends the Boxers.

The second instance I give to show the light in which foreigners are held just now is this. Since the Tientsin massacre of 1870, a ban had been placed by the officials—all except the most bigoted amongst the Conservatives—upon the term "Wang-kuei-tse" (foreign devils); men having been bambooed for using it, when found out by the officials. But here we find that not only is this term embodied in the war cry of the Boxers, but it has received official sanction from the lips of the Empress Dowager herself.

As for Yung Lu, he has kept quiet so far, and, indeed, is credited with having decided to stand by the Emperor should anything happen to the machinations of Princes Tuan and Ching, Kang Yi and Chao Shu-ch'iao, in Peking, and Li Ping-heng in the provinces. He is, at heart, a friend of the English. This I know. At a session not long ago of the Grand Council, when the question of the demands of Italy and France for territory in the South was discussed, Yung Lu alone advised the Government to throw itself upon Great Britain for protection, arguing that the United States and Japan would help Great Britain if Russia and France threatened reprisals. But he was overruled by Prince Ching, Prince Tuan, Kang Yi, and Chao Shu-ch'iao. "For," said Kang Yi, "we have scores to settle with Great Britain for the sake of the Yuen-Ming-Yuen Palace;

with Japan for the seizure of Formosa; and with the United States for treating the Chinese who go there and to the Philippines no better than dogs. Against Russia we have nothing. Whilst if France helps Russia, although we have deep grudges against France, we shall only be so much the stronger. I decide for keeping in the closest friendship with Russia, for with her by us we can defy the world. With Russia alone ready to help us, Great Britain will cower into the background." These sentiments being unanimously received with approbation by the rest of the Council, including the Empress Dowager, who nodded approval vigorously, Yung Lu became silent and said nothing more.

This, however, shows the defiant mood of the present Government, and foreigners would do well to ponder over this. In the meanwhile, the Boxers are daily waxing more powerful and numerous, and are spreading in the east, west, and south of Chihli. You will soon find the people of the South just as restless and hostile to the foreigners as has been the case with Chihli and Shantung for the past eight months or so.

Yet the Legations remained incredulous, and no steps were taken to protect the unhappy Europeans and Americans, scattered about in remote parts of China.

Suddenly thirty railway engineers were fighting their way in from Paoting Fu, like heroes; closing round, and at the last carrying, their women, for three days fighting all the day. The Belgians all arrived together, a wounded, worn-out, miserable company; a Greek and an Italian wandered in the day after, unable to give any account of themselves, so much had they suffered; and of six others of varied nationalities, including one woman too, we only know they died somehow.

That may be called the beginning of it all, when the railway men had to fly for their lives. The next thing was the tearing up of the rails on the way to Peking; and then for foreigners all communication ceased between them and the rest of the world. Of people happening to be visiting there, some left one day, as it happened; others who, as it happened, did not, never left at all. Even yet no steps had been taken to protect the unhappy English and Americans and Swedes scattered throughout Shansi, where Yu Hsien was Governor;

they were left as sheep for the slaughter, under the care of Yu Hsien, who had them brought into his own official residence, and then hewn down on July 9th, 1900. After that Yu Hsien wrote to his Empress, boasting of what he had done to fulfil her will; for the old Edict, that had been issued once before in Chinese history, was out again, "Exterminate all foreigners, and if they attempt to return to the sea exterminate them at once."

It is well to finish the story of Yu Hsien's career here. According to a Belgian priest of the district, whilst Prince Tuan and General Tung Fu-hsiang were still hanging about at Li-Ngan-Fu, the Empress only pretending to punish them, Yu Hsien alone, so far, had been put to death. Condemned like them to banishment, all went well with him till he arrived at the Capital of Kansuh, where the Governor Li, one of his accomplices in the massacre at Tai-Yuen-fu, marched out all the troops to meet him, giving him a grand sedan chair, and a triumphal entry, while the people saluted him as the defender of his country. Then the Empress received from the Powers a demand that had to be complied with, and the death sentence was telegraphed. The Governor put off the matter on the plea of its being the Chinese New Year season, when no official business was done, and besought Yu Hsien to commit suicide, but the latter refused, saying, "If I must die, it shall be at your hands, and then the people will avenge me." Then the Governor, unable to bring himself to kill his old chief, committed suicide, and Yu Hsien found partisans, who, excited by the sudden death of the Governor, went about shouting, "Death to the Europeans," whilst all the walls were covered with placards calling for a rescue. To prevent an uprising it was decided to execute Yu Hsien at once. He was busy writing letters, which he was allowed to finish, himself giving permission to one of his wives to survive him in order to rear their children. The two others were forced to swallow opium, one dying quickly, but the other in such convulsions that Yu Hsien himself is said to have finished her with a thrust from his dagger, after which he continued writing to his mother

and friends. At daybreak, February 22nd, 1901, he was still writing. At last he was told he must come forth. Being a high-class official he could not be beheaded by the common executioner. A military commander was charged with the deed; the moment Yu Hsien set foot in the street he was ordered to kneel and bow his forehead to the ground. As he raised it, the sword was to fall. But the sword only got buried deep in his neck, on which he raised his bleeding head, faltering out, "It has missed"; one of his own servants then despatched Yu Hsien with his own knife, cutting his throat. So ended the murderer of two bishops, and of a number of Roman Catholic priests and nuns; as well as of Protestants, men, women, and children, fifty in all, in his own residence; not to speak of all those slaughtered throughout the province by his orders in compliance with the Empress's instructions.

The Peking Syndicate men forced their way out of Shansi heavily guarded, and themselves guarding a certain number of others, who escaped with them; yet they knew how much more critical their precipitate flight made the position for those who yet remained behind. Thus began the great flight. From the Yangtse Valley, from far away Yunnan round by Tonquin, and Hong Kong, from the Tibetan border, from Kansuh and from Shansi and Szechuan we all got in alive. For happily the West did not rise; the Viceroy of Szechuan determined after many vacillations to throw in his lot with the Yangtse Viceroys, who, realising that whatever Russia might do in the North would only leave that region the more defenceless before Great Britain, determined to treat her as an ally, and themselves to keep the peace. And they did so with a combination of statecraft and firmness that cannot but move us to admiration. They were Chinese Viceroys, loyal to China! their fear, of course, being lest Great Britain should at once seize the Yangtse as a set off to Russia's getting Manchuria as per agreement.

As the uprising began with the attack upon the railway men, so one of the last victims was Lieutenant Watts Jones, R.E., on an exploring expedition in the West of China. He was murdered at a Shansi border town; but in between

there had been a little army of missionaries killed, and thousands upon thousands of Chinese Christians, so that this may rank as the greatest Christian persecution since the early days of the Christian Era. And through it all Tze Hsi sat in her beautiful Eho Palace with the incomparable wood carvings—burnt, alas! afterwards during Waldersee's occupation—with the gorgeous dragon-pattern yellow carpet, and the dragon-embroidered yellow cushions. There she dwelt at ease, the Emperor still always imprisoned on his fairylike island. And yet some people still try to make out that it was by Prince Tuan's orders that all was done, and that the Empress herself was not responsible. We shall see later how Li, with his strong common sense, dealt with this fiction. But there are Europeans who yet try to get others to accept it. Li Hung-chang would not even attempt to do so.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PEACE AND DEATH (1900-1901).

ALL this time people wondered what Li was thinking of the whole affair, as he kept order—and he did keep order —amongst the turbulent Cantonese. Li, who had been commissioned to hunt down the Reform party one by one, had been busy with the arrest of Mr. King, and in connection therewith, as it is believed, had had conferred upon him the privilege of wearing the Imperial five-clawed Dragon, an official "square" worn on the chest and back, the only difference between his and the Emperor's being that the latter wears his in a circular plaque.

I have been unable to find any special record as to a memorial from him with regard to the deposition of the Emperor on the elevation of the son of Prince Tuan to be heir, not to Kwang-Hsü, but to his predecessor, Tuang-Chih.

What he was thinking about other people's affairs we know from the story of a United States officer from the Philippines, who visited him, and asked his opinion on the occupation of those islands. The old Viceroy blamed the States severely for forsaking their traditional policy, assuring the officer that, had Grant lived, the country would never have entered upon a policy that he (Li) prophesied would be disastrous to them. When asked if China would object to America enlisting several regiments of Chinese mercenaries to fight the Filipinos, Li replied that China would not object if they were enlisted in the Philippines, and with the knowledge and consent of the Chinese Consul there. But he said

in conclusion: "You had much better sell the islands to Japan for the sum you paid Spain for them, and then clear off home and attend to your own business," and then suggested if that course were not pursued, the next best plan would be to buy Aguinaldo out. We always know so well how to manage other people's affairs!

Suddenly, Li announced that he had been summoned to Peking. In June, he said that he should not go unless ordered again by Imperial Decree, for he had telegraphed four times to Peking through the Governor of Shantung; if his advice were urgently needed, he felt sure that he should get another order within the week. On the 21st, the Viceroy of Chihli had telegraphed to Li, asking for additional troops, and saying he could only hold out four or five days at the most.

Meantime, all the authorities in Canton were beseeching him to remain there and protect them; to whom Li replied that, considering the present difficulties in the North, he was bound to protect the dominions of his Sovereign and to act for the good of the people, while he had already made arrangements for the peace of Canton. But he added what sounded simply like idle tales to European ears —that he had been receiving *several telegrams every day* about the fight between the foreign soldiers and the Boxers, which was causing great alarm at the capital and in the Imperial Palace. This made Europeans in China exceedingly indignant, for at this moment it was the belief of the Europeans that Peking was completely cut off from all communication with the outside world. Intense excitement prevailed, as the whole Diplomatic Corps was understood then to have been massacred, together with all other Europeans in the capital, and it was thought that Li, by these statements, was trying to impose upon the world—for which the world certainly then was in no humour.

Then appeared one of the characteristic declarations which remind us that the Chinese are still in the period of Sir Charles Grandison, when people in England wrote verses and always fainted upon critical occasions. "Being at so great a distance

Li Hung-chang wishes from the depths of his heart that he could fly to Peking for the deliverance of the Imperial Government; but he cannot. His heart is burning with so strong a desire that he has no time to eat and sleep. Knowing as he does the difficulties of the journey and the stretches of mountains and water between, and aware that by going alone so great a distance he cannot by himself be of any help to his country, still, when he thinks that his Imperial Majesty is in imminent danger, he must perforce proceed with all possible speed to show even a little spark of loyal feeling. Though a poor old man at the age of eighty, he does not mind any trouble or risk if he can stand by his country and face the danger."

This expression of sentiment, however, was quite compatible with a very sensible memorial to the Throne from Li, stating that his efforts as a peacemaker can have no success until the Throne really devotes its energies to the repression of the Boxers, the release of the Ministers, the protection of the Christians throughout China, and the suppression of Li Ping-heng.

At this time, Li was interviewed in writing by some home paper, and asked if he thought an amicable settlement in the North could be arranged, and on whom he would chiefly rely to bring it about. Li's answer to a question somewhat absurd under the circumstances was simply, "An amicable settlement is impossible." Asked if he would still proceed to Peking, he gave the evasive reply that the heat affected him very much, and delayed his journey. This and the affecting passage about "the stretches of mountains and water" are a little inconsistent with the fact that he had nothing to do but to get on a steamboat and enjoy a pleasant week's voyage as far as Taku. But, of course, at that time there were many difficulties and dangers of another kind for a Chinese Viceroy. He could not give it as his opinion, but affirmed as a fact to his interviewer that the Empress Dowager, the Emperor, and the Legations were safe.

People were already talking as if there were no sovereign in China, hoping that Li would be asked to show his credentials,

SIR EDWARD SEYMOUR. LI HUNG-CHANG. SIR PELHAM WARREN.
1900.

To face p. 312.

and saying the only Government foreign Powers recognised was that of the Yangtse Viceroys. But it seems clear that no Chinese ever looked upon the matter in this light; nor is there any reason to believe that telegraphic communication with Peking, by other somewhat more circuitous routes than the direct one to Tientsin, was ever for one day even interrupted. Tze Hsi was still alive, and it is probable that there was much more frequent communication with her than has ever been acknowledged. That she was to a certain extent acting under influence is, of course, also highly probable, indeed certain. It is curious that during all this period, Li Lien-ying, her favourite pseudo-eunuch, was reported dead; and a full account was given in the papers of his obsequies and the enormous fortune he had left behind him. Possibly he had been to some extent supplanted by the man whom the Empress had transformed at one bound from a petty official into the Governor of Peking, because he said he had taken care that every member of his household was a Boxer. Prince Tuan also, father of the thoroughly unsatisfactory heir apparent, who has since been set aside at the request of the Powers, was never a person easy to manage, all accounts agreeing that he was a man of both most vicious and most violent character. It is indeed alleged that he was not a Prince at all, but the son of a nurse, passed off by her mistress as her own, and with all the low tastes and coarse ways of a bad man of the coolie class.

On July 25th, Li Hung-chang ordered the Black Flag leader to march ten thousand of his men overland to Peking, and it was also said that he had given military commissions to several pirate chiefs, a common practice in China; but when he left, the Black Flag leader refused to begin his march unless he had twenty thousand men at his disposal; and when they in the end started, they spread terror and distress along their line of march. Li, meanwhile, having, as he said, received an Edict appointing him Viceroy of Chihli—his old post—left for Hong Kong, where Sir Harry Blake, the Governor, strongly urged him to go back, advising him

to remain true to the agreement with the other Yangtse Viceroys, each to preserve order in his own province.

Then comes a very pitiful time in Li's career. Arrived in Shanghai, at first no one would recognise him or visit him. No one would believe in his new appointment; people simply regarded him as the Viceroy of Canton, absent without leave, and come to Shanghai for the express purpose of getting some advantage out of embroiling the foreign Powers with one another. For the sake of society, or to keep himself in view, the old man used to have an armchair placed on the sidewalk of the Bubbling Well Road, the fashionable Shanghai drive, and there, with his suite standing round him, talk to any passer-by who cared thus to make acquaintance with him. A young Lieutenant of Marines, amongst others, did so, and obtained leave to visit him at his house and photograph him. Gradually, however, first one Consul-General, then another, visited Li, at first very privately, and then more openly, the British Consul-General alone refusing up to the last.

In August appeared the following Edict, said to have been issued on August 7th:—

The present complications between this Empire and foreign countries have been caused by certain mistakes made by the various combatants. Nor can we ever aver that our local authorities have been free from blame in the administration of their duties, and, in consequence, mutual hostilities have arisen, endangering our friendly relations with the Powers. This cannot be favourable for the prosperity of the whole world. We, therefore, hereby appoint Li Hung-chang Minister Plenipotentiary to negotiate with the foreign Powers; and he is empowered to confer by telegraph with the Foreign Offices thereof for the stopping of further hostilities, after which an approach towards peaceful negotiations can be made. Whatever arrangements towards this end may be made, Li Hung-chang is to memorialise us and ask for ratification.

It will be observed that he was not instructed to treat with the duly appointed representatives of those Powers still shut up in Peking, and "stormed at with shot and shell" by order of the same Government that appointed him.

The Viceroy, in the first instance, telegraphed for a steamer of his own Chinese Merchant Company, as also for a bodyguard of two hundred men. As soon as the Chinese in the North heard this, they said: "The Western nations are now anxious for peace, and have asked Li Hung-chang to act as mediator. He has arranged that they shall bear the entire military expenses of China for fifteen years. Tung Fu-hsiang, though, is not willing, and demands in addition the expulsion of all foreigners."

Another result of Li's arrival at Shanghai was that all manner of intrigues began, and on August 15th, the Viceroys, including Li Hung-chang, appealed to the good offices of the United States to prevent British troops from landing in Shanghai. Up till then, there had been no idea of making a difficulty about this step—afterwards considered so necessary for the protection of foreigners, that not only British troops landed there, but French and German troops also, and in the familiar language of the story of the three bears, "there they are still."

It was, however, from the safe distance of Li Ngan-fu, in famine-striken Shansi, that Li received a communication, purporting to come from the Empress Dowager, and seeking to make out that she had had nothing to do with the attack upon the Legations; a communication so extraordinary that Li, who was always a man of the world, saw there was nothing to be done but to repudiate it. He telegraphed to Yuanshih-Nia, then Governor of Shantung: "I find, in reference to the Secret Edict, that all the telegrams I have received from the various Foreign Offices, as well as what I have read in the foreign newspapers concerning what happened to the various Legations in Peking, do not at all agree with what is said therein. I therefore consider, under the circumstances, that it will be most difficult to open and complete negotiations on that line. I memorialised yesterday, asking for the appointment of Prince Ching, Yung Lu, and the Viceroys Liu K'un-yi and Shang Chih-tung as colleagues to bring about peace negotiations; and that our Ministers in foreign countries be commanded to explain, in a friendly and suave manner,

matters to the various Offices. As for the command that I should appeal to the various Consuls-General of Shanghai, I must say that, with the exception of certain Consuls who have called upon me, the rest have not done so, and seem to entertain other opinions. Those whom I have seen and asked to telegraph to their home Governments replied that they had no authority to negotiate for peace here. But I intend, as soon as matters clear up for the better, to take steamer to Tientsin and Peking, where opportunities may be seized to open negotiations in company with my colleagues."

On September 12th Li Hung-chang formally notified the Powers that, if not accepted as plenary peacemaker, he would go to Tientsin and take up his duties as Viceroy of Chihli. But before that the old man's courage for once failed him, and with his baggage already packed, he applied to the Throne for twenty days' sick leave, having apprehensions that he himself, the Yangtse Viceroys and his old *protégé* Shang, were all about to be denounced by the redoubtable Li Ping-heng on the charge of being friendly to foreigners. At last on September 18th, in a British steamer, he arrived at Taku unescorted. He had previously accepted the proffered escort of a Russian man-of-war, but Admiral Sir Edward Seymour pointed out to the Russian authorities that the vessel would be sufficiently protected by her British flag, and the intention to escort her was dropped. There was difficulty even then about Li's landing; the commanders of the naval forces made objections, and he had to go through an undignified ordeal.

Eventually, Li got up to Tientsin together with his suite, and was quartered not far from his old Yamên, in the Russian sphere of influence, and guarded by a detachment of Russians. He kept very quiet at first, and there was no talk even then of his going to Peking. None of the Powers—unless Russia—seemed inclined to listen to him; indeed, he was regarded with suspicion by all.

It was just about then that the dreaded Li Ping-heng was deputed to command a large force posted on the river banks, to oppose the advance of the Allied troops. As soon, however, as he heard the enemy coming, he stripped himself of

his official robes and ran faster than any frightened coolie; and in less than half an hour the whole army had disappeared.

It will be remembered that the Empress had fled from Peking on August 15th, the day after the Allied Troops had entered; having first put to death — not any foreigners, but—the Chinese President of the Board of War, and two Manchus, one the Vice-President of the Board of Revenue, and the other a Minister of the Tsungli Yamên; also the unhappy concubine Cheng Fu, who had been confined in a Palace dungeon where the light of day never penetrated, ever since the *coup d'état* of 1898. Now, before the flight of August 15th, 1900, she is said to have been thrown alive into a well by order of Tze Hsi, who personally superintended the deed; ordering her eunuchs to throw large stones in immediately afterwards, "in order to preclude any chance of her enemy's returning to life again." The other favourite Imperial concubine, Ch'ing Fei, was murdered at the same time, it is said. So many people were crushed to death during the Imperial flight that a Tartar dignitary said afterwards, "more people were killed by our troops in making a passage through the north-west gate for the escape of the Empress Dowager than suffered death at the hands of the Allied Troops. The cortège of the Empress travelled on the mangled corpses of those slain to let her pass"; adding, "Foreigners have captured our capital, and occupied it without atrocity or revenge. They are not barbarians after all. Why, they have not burned the city and massacred the people, as we ourselves should have done under similar circumstances. If we had captured the Legations, do you think we should have allowed anyone to remain alive, or left one stone upon another?"

In the end Li moved on to Peking in the course of September. He was in a very anomalous position. Whilst in Tientsin he was issuing proclamations which foreigners thought he ought not to do without the approval of Graf von Waldersee, the Commander-in-Chief. When, on October 24th, Prince Ching and Li Hung-chang, made co-plenipoten-

tiaries, offered an indemnity and new commercial advantages whilst proposing a cessation of hostilities, M. Pichon, the French Minister, replied on his own initiative that hostilities would cease when the heads of the principal culprits had fallen; without apparently consulting Graf von Waldersee who was at the same time sending an ultimatum to the Imperial Court; whilst it was becoming increasingly evident that Russia intended to shield all Chinese culprits, meanwhile doing her utmost to get all the Ministers to leave Peking *en masse*.

The Russian Legation, indeed, withdrew to Tientsin; an English Secretary of Legation piquing himself on having said at the time "not adieux but au revoir in Peking," for they presently returned. They always persistently shielded the Chinese criminals who had not specially sinned against Russia; perhaps they thought they had more than got compensation by their wholesale massacres along the Amur, and they certainly hoped to get more in the shape of Manchuria — and other things; already, as is understood, promised by Li.

Li's position was a very difficult one, and it is characteristic of the Chinese generally, rather than of Li in particular that we find him on one occasion stating, "The Powers are now craving permission to retire from Peking." After all, this was very little more of a distortion of the truth than the German papers indulged in when they heard that Great Britain had arranged for an unconditional surrender on the part of the Transvaal.

We find the Shanghai papers forcibly commenting on the absence of any reference to the restoration of H.M. Kwang Hsü and the retirement from power of the Empress Dowager: "If this is not an outcome of the present situation all labours of the Allies are thrown away." The Chinese Minister interviewed abroad was reported to have said: "Instead of losing their strength and their time in military or diplomatic skirmishes, let them bring back the Emperor to Peking with or without his consent, and deliver him for ever from the disastrous influence of the Empress. The day that my

master, dethroned for his attempt at reform, becomes free and independent, Europe will find its loyal auxiliary and its most certain guarantee."

One of the most esteemed and sagacious of British Consuls in China relating a conversation of his with Chang Chih-tung says, "I interposed that the retention of power by her Majesty appeared to be hardly open to discussion, since public opinion in Europe held strongly that she had fostered the Boxer movement, and had grasped power from the unwilling Emperor." This view the Chinese Secretary combated with vehemence; asserting that her Majesty resumed power only to relieve the Emperor, who found himself unequal to the burden, and that the position was thus quite constitutional. He confessed that her Majesty had thought the Boxers would constitute a species of "Landwehr" against invasion, but denied that at that time they had announced any hostility to foreigners or missions. The Consul further reports, "I rejoined that I did not suppose that a cell with a sentry at the door was within the bounds of likelihood. This declaration seemed to relieve him." This was what the Chinese nation naturally anticipated at the time—if indeed the foreigners would stop short of decapitation—and it is evidently what Tze Hsi herself dreaded, while she lingered at Li Ngan-fu.

Foreign intervention at that time in favour of the legitimate Emperor would have helped the Chinese of solid merit to stand up against their oppressors, and might have brought to an end the system of cruelty and injustice, tempered by rebellion, that had been the state of the country for so long.

But when Tze Hsi dethroned the nephew, and had herself set upon the throne, the diplomatic corps had not only abstained from helping the Emperor to whom they were accredited, but began immediately to pay open court to Tze Hsi; sending their wives, for the first time in history, to visit the usurping Empress; and now they continued to throw all their weight into the scale of Tze Hsi, whilst at the same time, curiously enough, England was protecting at all costs the Reform leaders she was bent on hunting down.

It is obvious that just as Russia had before selected Li Hung-chang to be a special envoy thither, because he had got into such a position that he had no other help to rely upon, so it was now Russia's interest to uphold the discredited ex-concubine who had brought China to the lowest depths of infamy, as well as disgrace; first in the war with Japan, and now by her fostering of the so-called Boxers, and attack upon the Legations accredited to her Sovereign. France naturally sided with Russia. Germany may have had inducements to do likewise; whilst Great Britain, as we all know, was occupied in the Transvaal. Sometimes one thinks that if the Home Government would but have concentrated itself on that, and given a freer hand to England's diplomatists on the spot, they might, unhampered, have achieved much better results for England's credit than those we now sadly contemplate.

It must certainly have been Li's doing that in January he and Prince Ching were severally memorialising the Empress that if she did not return to Peking, matters would take a turn for the worse for the Empire and the Court; a warning which she was besought carefully to observe.

In February, 1901, we hear of Li as ill, forgetting he is an old man, and rushing at his duties with the vehemence of youth. In November he had been nominally handed over to the Board of Punishments on account of the loss of Paoting Fu; which is enough to make anyone's brain reel, for to whom was Paoting Fu lost and by whom captured? It may be remembered that one of the most wholesale massacres had been at Paoting Fu, where the Allied Forces, in consequence, subsequently took down the topmost corner-stone of the wall; this being one of the greatest insults that can be done to a fortified city in China. Li complained now that he was heavily handicapped because he could not send telegrams in cipher to the Court. Next we hear that his despatches have been stolen *en route*. This was because he had consented to terms, which the recalcitrant Court refused to ratify, and he felt unable to communicate their refusal; and thus, according to Chinese fashion, "saved his face" by saying

that the despatches had been stolen. On March 25th he sent a most characteristic telegram: "If your Majesty do not ratify the Agreement, Russia will remain and take possession of Manchuria for ever, and other countries will follow suit. If your Majesty will ratify it, Russia promises to return all Manchuria to China, and this will prevent further protests from the foreign Powers." It was certainly a hard position for a man of sense, with a foreign enemy not exactly tapping his wires, but openly reading the telegrams that passed over them, and with the pleasure-loving old lady at the other end of the wire surrounded by his own Chinese rivals.

Three large theatrical troupes had followed the Court from Peking to Si Ngan-fu, and were playing almost daily before the Empress Dowager inside the improvised Imperial Palace, and giving daily performances before the Ministers and officials there. Meanwhile the people were dying of starvation, paying high prices even for human flesh, a picul of rice costing 18,000 cash and a cup of water five cash; yet an official just returned from Si Ngan-fu reported the Empress Dowager as looking well and self-satisfied, appearing more like a well-preserved woman of forty than one a quarter of a century older. The Emperor, on the contrary, looked worn and unhappy, anxiety and sorrow being clearly written on his countenance. Still one of the most pathetic figures in history, Kwang-Hsü is called Emperor of China.

In May Li was buying a large house in Peking for the reception of his family, whom he had sent for from Ho-fei It has been estimated that forty-one languages were at this time being talked in the streets of Peking, which had been renamed, and were lighted after a fashion, policed and cleaned. A Chinese newspaper said that one of the Allied Powers at Peking were pressing a number of natives to do work of this kind for them; and among the pressed there were a former acting Vice-President of one of the six Boards, and a recently appointed Secretary of the Grand Secretariat.

In June some of the foreign Ministers in an interview suggested to Li Hung-chang that when foreign Ministers

went to the Palace for audience, they should be provided with Imperial sedan chairs. Li, of course, immediately replied that there had never been any precedent for this. "Well," was the reply, "when your Excellency visited Europe, you went about in royal carriages, didn't you? Why shouldn't we, then, use your Imperial sedan chairs?" Li became silent at once. He had always been of a character to acquiesce in the inevitable.

This is, indeed, the case with the whole Chinese nation. They will oppose innovation tooth and nail. Once introduced they say no more about it. In what other country would so many people have committed suicide? In Peking, they killed themselves in whole families when the Allies marched in; so that, in one stately dwelling-house, a young Englishman, charged with scavenging duties, was shocked to find everyone dead but one old man—most of them hanging from the beams of the house. "But you must not do this. We do not mean to hurt you. Why, why do you do this?" "Because we are weary of life, and do not wish to have anything more to do with it," said the old man, turning his back upon him and looking away. It was the same in house after house. At Kirin, in Manchuria, the Tartar General, his wife, brother, brother's four wives, and four nieces, all committed suicide together in the official residence, which they set on fire. His name was in consequence to be placed among the tablets in the temple of heroes, while his women relations were to have memorial arches erected to them. In Peking, the Libationer of the Imperial Academy, together with his wife, poisoned himself. In connection with this, the following table is interesting, although I cannot flatter myself it is complete:—

COMMITTED SUICIDE.

First Rank. — Hsu Tung, Chinese. Upon flight of Empress.
Chung Yi, Manchu. Upon flight of Empress.
Kuei Heng, Manchu. Upon entrance of Allies.
Hsi Ching, Manchu. Upon entrance of Allies.
Li Ping Heng, Manchu. After battle Tung-chou.
Tseng Chi, Manchu. After defeat by Russia.
Yen Mao, Chinese Bannerman. After defeat by Russia and loss of Kirin.

Second Rank.—Hsu Cheng-yu, Chinese Bannerman. After fall of Peking.

Fu Jun, Manchu. After fall of Peking.

DIED.

First Rank. — A Grand Secretary died of old age just before disturbances began.

Assistant Grand Secretary. Of fright and exhaustion following Court's flight.

Hsin Fu. Of fright and exhaustion following Court's flight.

President of Court of Censors. Just before Peking siege.

President of Board of Works. Of illness during flight to Hsian-fu.

Chief of Yung Lu's staff (Generalissimo of Northern Army). Of spleen at Peking just before troubles.

Commander of left wing of Northern Army died of old age (eighty-eight), soon after Court's flight.

Second Rank.—Vice-President of Court of Censors. During flight to Hsien-fu.

Literary Chancellor of Fukein died of hearing all his family had been massacred by Boxers.

Chen Pao Chen, Governor of Shantung, cashiered, died of illness, strong reformer.

Governor of Kiaochow died.

Ex-provincial Treasurer of Shansi died just before troubles.

Some more are said to have died by journey to Hsien-fu.

Besides there were *five* executed by order of Prince Tuan, *two* executed by order of the Empress, *two* killed by Boxers, *one* killed by Allies, *three* killed in battle.

On March 2nd there was a Decree of nearly 2,000 characters, containing the names of men who fell in battle fighting, at the time of the arrival of the foreign troops in Peking; also of those who committed suicide with or without their

families. All were granted posthumous rewards and honours, and their heirs, if any, were to have official rank in recognition of their parents' patriotism.

Such was the state of things when Li, who had been so glad to get away, returned again to Peking. We have seen that at Tientsin he was a little premature. Indeed, Sir Ernest Satow, then British Minister, telegraphed Lord Salisbury in November, 1900, that Li, as Viceroy of Chihli, had addressed an impertinent note to the foreign Ministers, complaining of the conduct of the Allied troops in the Paoting Fu expedition, as also of the Chinese Christians. English, French, German, and Italian Ministers returned the note, saying they were unable to accept it, whilst others refrained from acknowledging it. But this did not seem to correct Li's manners; for he now summoned Yuan Shih-kai's troops to enter Peking and keep order, without consulting the foreign Ministers first; so that he had to be told that if met by the Allied Troops they would probably be fired upon. No wonder Li fell sick again and again, whilst people viewed his illness as merely diplomatic; the position was so false a one; voluntarily made so by the Allies, for the Chinese position was quite plain.

It is evident that the Chinese Government (as represented by the Dowager Empress, who until her flight certainly held the great Seal, which she never at any period had given over to the Emperor), in its desperate desire to get rid of foreigners, had determined partly by making use of a Chinese Secret Society, partly by a large increase of the Army, cloaked by being represented as secret society bands, to drive all foreigners out of China. The Empress, in fact, very nearly succeeded, and would probably have quite done so, but for the Irregular Forces, which the Government had summoned to its aid, getting a little out of hand and attacking the railway and the railway engineers somewhat prematurely. The foreign Governments, however, while each sending troops to protect their Legations—or rather their Ministers—chose to pretend to believe that they were helping the Government of China to put down an insurrection; and this even, as we have seen,

while routing Chinese Generals and their Armies, and taking Chinese cities.

One of the comic results of the ghastly state of things thus kept up was the number of Chinese officials who took out life policies at this time; and among them naturally we find Li Hung-chang.

Pierre Loti, in his "Derniers Jours de Pekin," a book which gives a picture of Peking in the autumn of 1900 as vivid as it is accurate in detail, tells how he found Li down a wretched alley way, in a ruined house; dirty Cossacks, with ruddy, naive faces, guarding the door; in the middle of the entrance hall a table and two or three armchairs of carved black wood; all the rest a confusion of the valises, bundles, bedding done up for travelling, as if all ready for sudden flight. He describes Li as colossal, with prominent cheek bones, bright observant eyes, the exaggeration of the Mongol type, yet good-looking in spite of this; and with the air of a grand seigneur, for all that his fur-lined gown was stained and worn, Li inquired what the French were doing in their palace, adjoining Waldersee's in the Eho Park, and, like Waldersee's, belonging to the Empress; indirectly he asked if they were spoiling it in any way, and seemed greatly pleased when assured they were taking the greatest care of it and everything in it. And then Li made one of the finest speeches that have ever been made about Peking: "Having visited all Europe," he said, "I have seen the museums in all your capitals. Peking had its museum also, for the whole Imperial city was a museum, begun centuries ago, which one might compare with the most beautiful of yours—and now it is destroyed." And the old man who spoke must have felt that he himself was being destroyed with it.

In April, 1901, six officials, among them Li Hung-chang were appointed to act as Regents. And in the same month numbers of memorials were sent from Peking, warning the Court against returning to the capital, and impeaching Prince Ching and Li Hung-chang. It was then that he and Prince Ching asked the British Minister to allow Mr. Timothy Richard to proceed to Shansi and settle all the cases between

foreigners and Chinese pending there, the stone that had been rejected by the British Legation in 1898 being thus made into the head of the corner by these Chinese dignitaries. But Sir Ernest Satow would not sanction Mr. Richard's life being risked by a journey to Shansi at that time, whilst the Committee on indemnities was still giving its report. And so, among the abomination of desolation, the ruins of this dishonoured capital, the old man worked laboriously and unceasingly without a proper staff to help him, until the day when he signed the protocol. He really should not have ventured out on that day, but he was determined to be present at the signing. He was then said to be better, but very weak, and had sent for all his sons to come to him. Lord Li had already some time before been summoned by telegram. It is reported that two days after the signing of the protocol Li sent a confidential secretary to the Russian Legation to inform the Minister that the Chinese plenipotentiaries had received instructions from Si-Ngan-fu, ordering them to make a formal demand for the evacuation of Manchuria, since the protocol had now been signed and peace assured between China and all the Powers. The reply on the occasion attributed to the Russian Minister was a characteristic one: "I am only a Minister accredited to Peking, and can take cognisance of merely local matters. I regret to say that I have no authority to deal with such a large question as the evacuation of the Manchurian provinces. The best for your plenipotentiaries to do would, therefore, be to communicate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs at St. Petersburg, who has power to deal with such important questions."

Then M. Lessar, the new Russian Minister, the inexorable, of Penjdeh fame, arrived, and Li, who had partially recovered, had a long conference with him early in October. According to a Chinese newspaper, there was another long interview of three hours on October 7th. On October 8th it was reported that Li was coming down to live in his temporary Yamên at Tientsin, and that he was going to meet the Emperor and Empress; at all events, as far as the railway would take him. It seems

to have been the restlessness of a dying man, for on November 1st he had another attack of a serious nature, but after a lapse of some twenty-four hours he became much better, feeling, however, extremely weak. A great deal of his sickness was stated to be due to disappointment and dissatisfaction, especially with regard to recent political events. Prince Ching, his colleague in the recent Manchurian convention with Russia, had strongly disagreed with the old Viceroy on certain important points of the convention, insomuch that the Prince subsequently gave up all responsibility in the matter. We learn that another thing that hastened his end was the information that different Viceroys and Governors were intending to make valuable presents to the Empress Dowager on her birthday. Having failed to do this himself, he began to worry, and became for a while delirious.

M. Lessar had been urging Li Hung-chang to sign the Manchurian convention, but unavailingly, Li's sickness being so serious that by November his recovery was quite hopeless. He is said to have invited the Russian Minister to call at his house, being too weak to leave his residence, in order to inform M. Lessar of the Court's decision to abide by the advice of the Viceroys Liu K'un-yi and Chang Chih-tung, and refuse the ratification of the latest Manchurian convention; also that he, Li, had been commanded to appeal to the so-called Russian "friendship" for China, and ask for more lenient conditions, which the Chinese Emperor would conscientiously ratify. The feelings of the Russian Minister may be better imagined than described, upon learning of the shattering of his hopes for a brilliant coup which would give Manchuria to Russia for ever. It was also reported that during the secret consultations between the Viceroy and the Russian Minister about Manchuria, an interpreter of the Japanese Legation called on the former and strongly advised that a demand should be made requiring the Russians to evacuate Manchuria entirely within twelve months of signing the Convention. To this, Li replied that it was intended to insert a clause that the Russians should evacuate Manchuria in the spring of 1903, "which was only a little over a twelvemonth,

and not so very far from the wishes of the Japanese Government."

On November 6th Li asked the Government to order Prince Ching to return at once to Peking, and himself telegraphed to Prince Ching to return at once, as he expected momentarily to breathe his last. There is a report that every morning the indomitable Russian Minister went again to try to get the seal of Li Hung-chang affixed to the Manchurian agreement, but that it was impossible to accomplishit. The last moments of Li were passed in the midst of confusion and wailing; fortunately, the old man had become unconscious.

It is interesting to note that one of his last acts had been to write an introduction to Dr. Martin's latest translation of International Law. Thus, working to the last, died Li Hung-chang, on the 7th November, 1901, aged seventy-eight years and six months; according to Chinese modes of expression, seventy-nine years old. The Empress wrote at once, saying, to use the quaintly expressive English of a Chinese translator: "We find that the Grand Secretary and Viceroy of Chihli long ago rose up from a literary position, made a brilliant record in military affairs, *blazed his name* at the Court, uplifted the country and put down the great rebellion that threatened it. For the last thirty years he undertook the management of international affairs. Since trouble occurred in Peking last spring and everything was in a critical condition, the Grand Secretary Li took upon himself the whole burden with loyalty and fortitude. Thus, our fatherland is again saved; the great and the low can live in peace. During his illness, we often sent him messages—as everything was just settled, we thought we could have him for many years yet; but suddenly he has been struck down by hæmorrhage, never to rise again. At such a difficult time we have to lose a statesman so indispensable! How unfortunate we are," etc. etc.

There was also a Decree granting the posthumous honour of Marquis of the first class in recognition of his eminent services to the dynasty; allowing the funeral ceremonies and

Government grant usually permitted to a Grand Secretary on his demise; and further commanding Prince Kung to select an escort of ten members of the Imperial Bodyguard, and to carry to the late Viceroy, on behalf of the Empress, a "T'o-lo" prayer coverlet, to be used as a shroud for the deceased statesman. Prince Kung was also commanded to pour out libations to the manes of the deceased in the name of their Majesties the Emperor and Empress Dowager, and finally, the name of Li Hung-chang was to be inscribed in the Temple of Faithful and Loyal Ministers, to be worshipped with other great Ministers of the dynasty who have passed away.

Mr. Pethick, for so many years Li's secretary, arrived in Peking too late to see him. His own health was in a serious condition, the result of the strain put upon him in 1900, when he guided a party to the relief of the Christians at the old Portuguese Cathedral of Nantang. He shortly afterwards died too, and seems to have carried his master's secret with him to the grave.

The Emperor and Empress returned to Peking, as was described most graphically in the *Times* of the period, the Empress Dowager looking after her luggage like a thrifty housewife, and talking to everyone, even nodding and calling out to the foreign ladies on the top of the city wall; the Emperor sad and silent and self-contained. There was no Li Hung-chang to welcome them. On June 1st, 1902, the body of Li Hung-chang was carried out of Peking by sixty-four bearers, a brilliant military and religious procession accompanying it. At Tungchow the coffin was placed on board a junk, to be conveyed to Taku, where it was transferred to a steamer, in which to complete the journey to the last resting-place of the Li family at their ancestral home at Ho-fei, in Anhui. Chinese and foreigners were invited to the funeral barge to pay their last respects. There was an altar set up near it, and all the morning officials were there burning incense and showing marks of respect; but English people who went late found the coffin covered with common red cloth, a coolie's dirty jacket thrown upon it, and not even one person watching beside the remains of China's grand old man. The near

relations were, however, in an adjacent boat, and, of course, the funeral, when it came off, was of the grandest; but long before that poor old Li seemed quite forgotten in the land where he had for so long played such a principal part. His eldest son, however, only survived his father a few months, broken down, as Chinese said, by grief and trouble. It was he who had commissioned a learned Chinese to write a biography of Li Hung-chang, allowing six years for the preliminary reading through of the immense mass of papers and documents left behind. This arrangement, however, a member of the family tells me, has been put an end to by Li Ching Hsui's own death. Li had one concubine, who bore him several children. This is very usual in China, but it is not universally the case among the rich and great, as many foreigners believe. There are many high-class officials known to be husbands of but one wife.

Had Li Hung-chang died some twenty years earlier, there can be no doubt as to the estimation in which he would have been held by posterity, and as misfortunes fell upon China, we can easily fancy how people would have cried out for Li Hung-chang, and said, "If only Li were yet alive!" As it is, the war with Japan but too plainly showed that he, who had been trusted with the supreme power, had absolutely failed to put China in a position to defend herself. He and his party remained predominant to the last, whilst their unhappy country was brought to such a pitch of helplessness that one shrinks from thinking of the sorrows to be endured by surely the most patient, law abiding, long suffering people on God's earth. To have summarily partitioned China, as people talked of doing, would have been merciful in comparison with what must now surely occur, as the people, maddened by exactions to meet an indemnity, for which many of the provinces must feel themselves in no wise responsible, will naturally rise either in rebellion against their own Government or in what is called a riot against foreigners, first here, then there, after which we may look for fresh demands from each aggrieved Power.

Like superior people, we dubbed Li Hung-chang the great

opportunist, not seeing that the opportunism was as much on our own side, and that Li's party took refuge with Russia, which could be counted upon, though his countrymen feared there might be "many bitter fruits" from this policy. All through life Li Hung-chang stood firmly by the Empress Dowager, and she stood by him. There was nothing of opportunism now. Had it not been for Li and Gordon, the Taiping rebellion would probably have overthrown the Manchu dynasty, and a new China might have arisen out of the ashes. As it is, a corrupt, cankered Court has been preserved at the expense of the nation, and the whole effort of the European Powers has been directed towards exalting the central Government, contrary to the genius of the Chinese people, in accordance with which each Viceroy would improve and develop his own province. It does not appear that there is much hope for China now, and in this connection Li Hung-chang suggests Rienzi rather than Bismarck. The latter left behind him a united Germany, the other a divided and dividing Italy.

Those who have had the patience to follow Li's career through the preceding pages ought to be in a position to decide from his actions how far Li guided events or was himself guided by them. That Li was astute and had strong common sense we cannot doubt. But a man of this type not uncommonly makes the greatest mistakes, when confronted with vital issues, which demand a certain amount of idealism from him who is to deal with them aright. That Li was a loveable character we have every evidence. He was true to his friends; even when people conspired against him he was still kindly and genial. This is possibly a sign of loose principles, which make a man incapable of righteous indignation as much as of good nature. But this we cannot say of the other fact, that Li, though constantly impeached himself, never impeached anyone, nor did he bear malice against men who had impeached him. Yet we are told that he never forgot a face, foreign or native, and knew what each man was available for should he meet him a second time.

In family life he seems particularly to have shone; an affectionate husband, a kindly though somewhat stern father

a particularly loving grandfather. No one has ever even accused him of yielding to low vice. And though fond of conviviality, an Englishman who knew him well says Li has always been known for his moderation and temperance. He seems to have been always ready to encourage any movement for the good of those around him, yet without ever being specially interested in it himself. In less troubled times he might have passed across the stage of life, a somewhat stately figure, conferring pleasure by his very presence as he passed. It was his lot to be born into the world when his country was being torn to pieces by internal revolution, and to live on till the various nations of Europe, each thrusting out a greedy hand, were seeking to make of her an India; and Li Hung-chang, now an old man, versed only in the ways of Asia, was not equal to the situation, and saw no way out of the *impasse*. Perhaps no man could have.

There remains the one great imputation upon his character that he sold his country for gold. That Li loved money we cannot doubt. How far he was indebted to his able management of money for his advancement all through life it is hard to say. He certainly did not spend it in riotous living and luxury, and the fortune he acquired has probably been enormously overestimated. But it remains the fact that, entrusted for years with large sums to put his country into a position of defence, he never achieved that end. He also surrounded himself with men notoriously corrupt; when the Japanese attacked China the horrible rottenness of the state of things became manifest to the whole world, China falling to pieces from her own corruption. And as the head of a department must always be held answerable for his subordinates the responsibility for this must remain with Li.

"*Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*" old Li has passed away, but in this world of shades and images he—Li Hung-chang, whom we all knew, whose hearty laugh we still remember—has been canonised and is to be worshipped with the other great Ministers of the Dynasty who passed away before him. Can our ways seem as strange even to the Angels as Chinese ways appear to us?

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

THE memorial by which the Viceroy Chang Chih-tung won his fame, stating why Chung-how's treaty with Russia should be repudiated :—

June 1st, 1880.

I have lately read in the *Peking Gazette* that as a treaty had been concluded with Russia, by which your Majesty's Ambassador had dishonoured his commission, your Majesty has commanded the Court officials to consult together. Of this treaty, I have heard by rumour the general purport, and as I am anxious and distressed in the extreme, I beg reverently to address your Majesty and the Empresses Regent on the momentous issues of its acceptance or rejection.

With the exception of the most glaring blunders in the eighteen articles of the new treaty, I shall leave it in other respects unnoticed. These are as follows :—By an overland trade route from Chia Yü-kuan direct to Hankow, viâ the cities of Si An and Hanchung, the vulnerable points of Kansu and Shênsi, and the up-river sections of Ching and Ch'u (Hupeh, etc.), are all threatened. Trading places, in daily increasing numbers, will luxuriate like branching weeds, news will travel everywhere, and although our frontier be guarded, we shall have lost the very heart of the country. This is the first concession to be refused. The Manchurian provinces are the cradle of the Imperial family, and the city of Petuné is the centre of the Province of Kirin. If your Majesty permits it to be approached by Russian ships, the concession will be tantamount to throwing the whole of Manchuria open to the Russians. They will then be close to Peking, our Northern frontier [literally head and shoulders] will be defenceless and exposed, and we shall have voluntarily retired six hundred miles west of Sui Fên for no reason whatever. The

navigation of our inland waters has for years been sought in vain by foreign countries, and if we grant the privilege to Russia, other States will be guided in their demands by her example. This is the second concession to be refused.

When our Government does not insist on the payment of duties, it is as a measure of relief to traders. But if, in Sungaria, Kashgaria, and throughout Mongolia, the Russians are to be allowed to trade without paying any duties, Chinese merchants will in time be beggared. This is a small matter compared with what will follow. The feeble and poverty-stricken Mongols will only exist to be the victims of Russian exactions, and the vast expenditure incurred in the subjugation of the new dominion will have been wasted for the sole benefit of the Russians. And further, the trading establishments which they have opened at Kalgan and other places in the interior will gradually extend far and wide, so that, on the outbreak of hostilities, their communications will be complete from one end to the other, ten thousand li within our borders. This is the third concession to be refused.

The dependencies of inner and outer Mongolia are the bulwarks of China. The desert of Gobi, stretching for ten thousand li, is a barrier set by heaven to the Russians, and if they seek to invade our borders, they will find it everywhere along the Northern frontier difficult and troublesome. But if the Russians are allowed to hold out extra pecuniary inducements to the Mongolians, who already act as their couriers and servants at the postal stations in Mongolia, and war does some day break out, the Russians will have simple and perfect communications by letter, their Commissariat and Treasury will be unimpeded; by their influence they will fan into rebellion our dependent States, and our tribes will act as Russian guides. This is the fourth concession to be refused.

The treaty enumerates thirty-six barriers where the Russians are to have the right to pass the frontier. They comprise a line much too long, making it equally impossible for us to examine travelling caravans in time of peace, or to repel an invading army in time of war. This is the fifth concession to be refused.

There is no law which permits a merchant, of what nationality soever, to carry arms. What then can be intended by a declaration in the treaty, made without the slightest reason, that every Russian may carry a gun? On the sudden entry of a crowd of a hundred or

a thousand Russians, who will be able to distinguish soldier from merchant? This is the sixth concession to be refused.

In all the clauses regarding trade and duties, the Russians get, in an underhand way, some advantage; other countries will expect similar privileges and make similar demands, and the revenue of the Hankow Custom-house will show a yearly deficit of millions of taels. This is the seventh concession to be refused.

In 1864, the boundaries of the New Dominion were defined by treaty. The Russians now wish to annex land within these boundaries and to cut off our communications with the most southerly of the eight cities of Turkestan. The Northern Section of the new dominion is barren and bare, but the Southern cities are rich and populous. We contend for a stony desert and abandon fertile soil. We strive after a false fame and meet the real calamity. This is the eighth concession to be refused.

We are to allow the Russians to station Consuls at Ili, Tarbagatai, Cobdo, Uliasut'ai, Kashgar, Urumtsi, Kuché, Hami, Turfan, Chia Yü-kuan, etc., and thus give them control of the North-west frontier and the whole of the New Dominion. With foreign officials come foreign merchants, and with foreign merchants come foreign soldiers. They will usurp our authority and influence to begin with, and in the course of time our guests will have become our hosts. It will come to this, that the officials will be Russian, and we shall have no soldiers. By a law recognised in every country, the coasts and frontiers of China are the only places where the Consuls of foreign States are permitted to be stationed. But cities like Uliasut'ai, Cobdo, Urumtsi, Kuché, Hami and Chia Yü-kuan are within our frontiers; and with every country following the example set by Russia, the whole of the interior of the eighteen provinces of China will be overrun by foreign officials. This is the ninth concession to be refused.

By allowing the Russians to return Ili to us, while they still stick proudly to the mountain passes on three sides of it, to its barriers within and without, and keep their hold of the heights which dominate the plains, we lose the keys of the country. Lop off from Ili the section to the west of the Kohsu River, and to the north of Koer-hmantou, and there remains no stretch of soil to till, no pasture on which to graze our flocks, and of the wealth of the country there is nothing left. Kinting-szu also, which has long been a Russian trading mart, is not to be returned to us, and becomes by

the treaty a Russian possession. Thus, the long-high road from the East (*i.e.* China proper) to Ili will pass through a nest of Russians, and the country will be without an outlet. Few as are the people left in it, they too will be driven out by the Russians, the country will be deserted, and we shall have thrown away 2,800,000 taels of useful money to get back an Ili without natural defences, without material resources, without a population and without an outlet. And all for what good? This is the tenth concession to be refused.

The Russians, in making their demands, show themselves to be plunderers and bullies of the worst type; Ch'ung How, in assenting, showed himself to be a blunderer and a fool in the extreme. Your Majesty and the Empresses Regent, by your burst of indignation, by calling the Ambassador to account, and by summoning your Council, show yourselves to be possessed of a most eminent wisdom and decision. The Grand Council, the Tsungli Yamên, your Majesty's officers of every class and degree, the whole country in short, unite in saying that this treaty must not be. Those who dare not speak out officially their opinion that the treaty must be altered refrain because they fear that to alter a treaty which had been once agreed to would most probably lead to a quarrel. In my opinion, there is no occasion for fear, and I say this treaty must be altered. Trouble is certain to follow, but if we do not alter it, we are not fit to be a nation.

There are four cogent reasons for my request that the treaty be altered:—1st, a prompt decision has to be given; 2nd, a bold attitude must be taken up; 3rd, right is on our side; 4th, a plan is arranged [in case of war].

What do I mean by a prompt decision? On the above grounds, I say, execute Ch'ung How. This is what I mean by a prompt decision.

What do I mean by a bold attitude? The Russians deceived our unprotected and imbecile Ambassador, and browbeat him into signing a treaty by which, for every penny they spent, they got back a hundred, and yet were not satisfied. The Russians, in a loutish way, are a great nation, and one does not expect them to act in this manner. It is not China alone that is exasperated with Russia; in the estimation of the world her character is the reverse of straightforward. For the declaration of the Russian Minister at Peking, that he was to return home without waiting for your Majesty's decision in regard to the treaty, there is no warrant in

Western law. It is evident that this is an empty threat. The best course for your Majesty to pursue will be to issue an Edict calling the attention of the whole official body, metropolitan and provincial, to the injustice of the Russians, and to the reasons for rejecting this treaty to which rulers and people of China alike have given public expression. To the various foreign Powers a despatch should be sent, so that they may be able to decide whether China or Russia is in the right, and to order their assemblies to insert in the newspapers an account of how China has exhausted every possible appeal to reason. Acting on the national indignation which will brook no wrong, we must hold fast to our resolution not to accept the treaty. Although Russia is a great country, since her bitter conflict with Turkey her soldiers are worn out, her resources are exhausted, and her rulers and her people are estranged. Indeed, of late years there have been reports that the Sovereign has had to take precautions against attempts on his life. If in spite of all this he repudiates [our old] treaties and our friendship, by his schemes in distant lands he will burden his people, and will certainly bring upon himself "a calamity in his house," which will inevitably destroy him. How can he then attack anybody? Let your Majesty proclaim this throughout the land. This is what I call a bold attitude.

Our Ambassador certainly signed the treaty, but he never had your Majesty's permission to do so, and the instrument itself, not having been sealed with the Imperial seal, is in the position of a document (in the olden days) unattested by the oath of blood. How can it be received as evidence? The moral position of the Russians is bad, and their arguments are poor. How can they fix a quarrel on us? If then we defer to another time our claims to Ili, we shall have what I have called right on our side.

What do I mean when I say we have a plan for a campaign? As the Russians are bent on disregarding public law, and on rejecting our friendship, we shall have to defend ourselves, most probably in three quarters: in Turkestan, in Manchuria, and at Tientsin. [In Turkestan] Tso Tsung-t'ang is in command of a victorious army of soldiers sturdy with years of toil; and Kin-shun, Liu Chin-tang, Si-lun, and Chang-yo are thoroughly good generals. If they remain quietly on the defensive, the Russians must be beaten; and, with the Mongolian tribes as our auxiliaries, the Russian retreat will be cut off. Neither horses nor steamers will take them home. They may break into the province of Kirin.

The frontier on that side is distant, the forests are thick, and it is more than 6,000 miles from the capital of Russia. If an army without supports were to invade it deeply, it would necessarily be a small one, and its commissariat service would be difficult. For this emergency a general of ability, skilled in both military and civil administration, armed with great powers, and supplied with an adequate military chest, should be appointed. Half the total sum now given to the marine defences of the northern and southern sections of our coasts should be constituted by your Majesty a fund for the defence of Manchuria. Let your Majesty give orders to Tso Tsung-t'ang and Kin Shun to detach from their staff several generals, natives of Manchuria, who know war, and send them east to await orders. Even if we encounter a slight reverse, we have only to keep steady and unwavering for a few months to see the Russian force dispersed.

Tientsin is close to your Majesty's capital. Russian men-of-war, however, are prevented by the English and French Law of Sea-ports from leaving the Mediterranean,* and the appearance in China of the merchant vessels in which the Russians will have to transport their troops will be a very different thing from (the arrival of) European ironclads. On the conspicuous talents of Li Hung-chang China here rests her hopes. The enormous expenditure of millions of taels, spent year after year in the manufacture of war material, has been incurred for just such a crisis as to-day's. If, after all that, we cannot fight one battle even, of what use are the servants in whom your Majesty trusts? Prostrate, I implore your Majesty to issue to Li Hung-chang an Edict ordering him to carry out, without the slightest alteration, your Majesty's policy, and holding him alone responsible for its success. He must select his staff, drill his troops, and make additions, after the German methods, to our forts. He must be told that if our soldiers fight and win, your Majesty will reward the victors with patents of nobility; and that if we fight and lose, your Majesty will punish the vanquished with exceptional severity.

With the 2,800,000 taels with which we are to buy back Ili, we should hire stout soldiers from Europe. And they would be certain to fight for us. For the ultimate intention of the Russians, in steadily encroaching on Kashgaria, and in annexing Khokand, is to get a grip of India from behind. It is not China alone that

* Mediterranean means Black Sea, and Law means Treaty of Paris.

suffers, England also is aggrieved; and if Li Hung-chang were to make it plain to the British Minister that without the molar the maxillary bone cannot be used, and that without lips the teeth will get cold, England would make common cause with us against the common enemy.

I would not dare to speak so boldly, and to purpose to stake the whole country on a single cast, were I not deeply sensible of the changed times we live in, of our daily accumulating troubles, with European nations usurping our authority, Japan meditating the annexation of our territory, and now Russia provoking us into a quarrel. But if we yield and give in, fresh demands by other nations will be made, and as a time must inevitably come when we must assert ourselves and refuse to retire, how can it be that we can yield and give in now? I do not go into the question whether, in the event of our resisting Russia, we must, in natural justice, get the victory; for, in actual warfare, victory and defeat are uncertain. But I do think that if Russia fights, she can never pass Chia Yü-kuan (in Kansu). Even if she is victorious, she can never capture Ninguta (in Manchuria), and the result of the campaign will be that she will not get far enough to disturb the general prosperity of our country. Days will be wasted in tedious delays, food will be deficient at every stage, and their resources will be weakened. What then have we to fear?

From this moment let us take a decided course. This is the time to find out whether China is strong or weak, and whether the talents of her leaders have grown or diminished. With brave generals and a wise leader, now is our time to fight; a few more years, and Tso Tsung-t'ang, though still alive, will be declining in vigour; Li Hung-chang, with vigour unimpaired, will be old; our powers of offence will be exhausted; and if we wanted to fight then, we could not. The Russians have cities to the east of us, garrisons on our west, trading establishments to the north of us, their holes and caves are everywhere, within and without our frontier; they are in communication with Thibet, and they threaten Korea. If we do not now put a barrier between us and them, the time will come when we shall have to fight them within our own borders; of what use will it be to repent then?

Military preparations are the one essential. And they must go on whether the treaty be altered or not. Our demand for the rendition of Ili must be deferred whether the treaty be altered or

not, Ch'ung How must be executed whether the treaty be altered or not. This is not my own individual opinion, but the public sentiment of the whole country.

Co-operation in deciding the measures to be taken is the duty of all the high officers of the crown; the bold attitude I have spoken of must be maintained by the whole body of Chinese officials; to explain that right is on our side is the duty of the Tsungli Yamên; but it is for your Majesty alone and the Empresses Regent to give the decision regarding the past. The question concerns the highest interests of the Empire. Sit still and look on, I cannot; remain silent, I dare not. Looking upwards I implore your Majesty to place this my memorial before the Council, that they may deliberate on what I now, in the extremity of my grief and resentment, humbly implore your Majesty to peruse.

APPENDIX B.

INDICTMENT of Li Hung-chang, signed by a certain Hanlin Reader and fifty-four members of the College of Literature :—

December 5th, 1894.

A memorial impeaching a certain high officer of State and calling for his dismissal from the public service, on the grounds that he is stupidly incompetent, proudly arrogant, that he has entirely lost all feeling of what is right, and has grossly mismanaged matters affecting the country's welfare.

When, in the first instance, Japan created trouble and encouraged rebellion in an outlying dependency of China, the memorialist, on reverently perusing the Imperial Declaration of War, dated 1st of August, recognised that it was only as a last resort that the Emperor was driven to have recourse to arms. The consummate feeling of compassion (towards Korea), not only inwardly cherished, but thus outwardly made manifest, has commanded the respect of all mankind. Yet, during the last two months, the situation has undergone repeated changes. Alarming reports of the defeat of our troops and the loss of our territory follow each other in quick succession, and startled by day and terrified by night, the minds of men are in great perturbation. The state of mental care and anxiety displayed by the Edict of the 25th of September, giving expression to a desire on the part of H.I.M. the Empress Dowager, that, as long as hostilities continued, all festal celebrations in the Eho Park be suspended, appealed to the hearts of Chinese and foreigners alike, and a universal sense of hatred (against those who caused H.M. this pain) was excited in all breasts.

The memorialist, however, being of opinion that a full and clear statement should be made of the causes which have combined to bring about these calamities, and the hidden influences which have contributed towards this gross mismanagement of affairs, does hereby venture to treat of them in minute detail for H.M.'s information. The

memorialist has been given to understand that not for one moment can Japan's status as a nation or her military strength be compared to those of Western countries. Her National Debt is large and her people poverty-stricken, which proves that her prosperity rests on an an insecure foundation. She has fast cruisers, but no large battleships, which indicates a defect in her military organisation. Her soldiers are hurriedly levied and are not trained troops. Her political power is divided amongst parties, and the administration consequently lacks unity.

On war first breaking out, all military experts and those acquainted with foreign affairs unanimously compared Japan's action to that of the praying mantis, which stretched out its feelers to stop the chariot, and which was for its temerity immediately crushed to death. Although even Europeans talked of China's success as a foregone conclusion, events have proved under how great a misapprehension all laboured. The capital of Korea was lost, shortly afterwards to be followed by the reverse sustained at Yashan. Ch'engch'uan was abandoned, and the army fled in confusion at Pingyang. Vessels of war which were sunk on the Han river have not been recovered, and ironclads have been destroyed by fire on Deer Island. Port Arthur and Wei-hai-wei are the keys of the sea approach, yet no steps are taken to prevent the patrolling of the Gulf by cruisers of the enemy. Ichou constitutes the protection of the Fengt'ien frontier, yet has this bulwark now been completely torn down. The appointment of Wei Ju-kuei transformed the Huai troops, veterans of a hundred fights, into a fleeing rabble. The appointment of Ting Ju-chang reduced a fleet of powerful battleships to a collection of leaking sieves. So far from being able to recover Korea, the defences of the Tumen and the Yalu have become matters of the gravest consideration. So far from being in a position to undertake operations at Chemulpo, a descent on Taku and Peit'ang is an imminent danger.

Who is it that has had supreme command of the armies? Who is it that has controlled advance and retreat, led the great against the small, the mighty against the feeble, with the result that a series of such disastrous defeats have been sustained? Who is it, if not the subject of this memorial—the incompetent, arrogant, unprincipled, highly placed official, who by his conduct has so imperilled the interests of the State that his name stinks in the nostrils of his countrymen?

The grounds on which this universal detestation has been incurred are as follows:—

1. Having received orders to succour Korea, this official secretly tied the hands of his general officers. Having failed to take any precautionary measures in the first instance, he proceeded, when the crisis did arrive, to hamper their action in every way. At Hsiaopu, Yashan, Pingyang, and Lutao, our troops sat with folded arms calmly waiting until they were surrounded and attacked by the Japanese. But surely he cannot seriously expect to be able to make such complaisance a basis on which to conduct peace negotiations? Having neglected to seize the opportunity afforded at the beginning, such action simply tends to raise the prestige of Japan and lower that of China.

On every occasion the Japanese take the initiative, and thus it comes about that the valour of our troops has to give way before them. We, on the other hand, invariably wait until the first move has been made, and by reason of our tardiness have to bow to the conqueror. The complete wreck which has consequently supervened is entirely due to delay and mismanagement.

2. When an army starts on a campaign in a distant country, proper commissariat arrangements are of the first importance. A department of this nature already exists at home; how much more necessary is it when troops have to be taken outside of China's border? Foreign countries carrying on war consider the supply of food for the army to be of even greater moment than that of the arms. The high official referred to has had experience of military matters for over thirty years; how comes it then that he has made no provision in this respect? First take the flight at Yashan, where the troops were without provisions or ammunition; then the battle at Pingyang, where they were similarly destitute; no camp followers or baggage carts were provided, so that each soldier had to carry his own rice and was without a supply of spare cartridges. Driven to extremities by hunger, they were compelled to forage for food and take it by force, thereby incurring the ill-will of the Korean people. When it came to fighting, they had to submit to be slaughtered, having nothing but their bare hands wherewith to strike the enemy. The valiant troops on whom the Throne had placed reliance throughout twenty years, and in whom the hopes of the people centred, thus helplessly, without arms and without food, lay down and died in vain. All this is owing to

the blind confidence reposed by a certain official in his own minions, and his unwillingness to organise a commissariat.

3. The designs of Japan on Korea have been maturing during many years; how then comes it that in the spring of the present year, on the first indications of her intention to carry these designs into execution becoming apparent, the Superintendency of Northern Trade, with its splendid Intelligence Department for foreign affairs, saw and heard nothing? When matters were coming to a head, Yuan Shih-k'ai, who thoroughly saw through the Japanese plans, sent frequent secret messages to this official, and had the latter disclosed to the Throne in the beginning the true position of Japan towards Korea there would have been time carefully to consider the matter, and it is hardly likely that there would have been any of the ill-considered, hasty action which subsequently ensued. He, on the contrary, at first kept everything shrouded in mystery, only letting fall vague hints, and afterwards sought by greatly exalting the power and prowess of the Japanese to instil a dread [of open rupture]. When the crash came, the inner secrets of Japanese intrigue were well known to this high official, whereas the Throne was but imperfectly acquainted therewith. On Yuan Shih-k'ai being summoned to Court by Imperial Edict, the official in question used every endeavour to prevent his going to Peking, and all telegrams that passed through his hands for transmission to the Emperor he revised and altered in such a manner as to make their contents correspond with the views he himself was putting forward, and to prevent any knowledge of the actual state of foreign affairs reaching the Government. The suggestions and orders emanating from the Throne, therefore, were formed at a distance from the scene of action on unreliable data. The punishment of death would be too light a penalty to pay for such treacherous deceit and misrepresentation.

4. Of late years, all positions of profit and influence throughout the Empire have been under the charge of this official; all military power has been vested in him, and the Throne has ever regarded him as a tower of strength. He, however, has reared a horde of parasites for the purpose of hoodwinking and deceiving the Government. —— and —— are his eyes and ears; —— and —— are as his inmost heart; Ting Ju-ch'ang and Wei Ju-huei are as his talons and teeth; Kung Chao-yu and Lui Han-fang are as his wings. These individuals are derided and scorned by everybody, yet are they appointed

by this high official to posts in the Customs, the Grain Transport Service, the Telegraphs, and the Ordnance Department. To get proper men to fill posts of this nature is a matter of the greatest importance to a country conducting a war, yet are these creatures so firmly established in their present positions that they cannot be dislodged. Ordinarily they oppress and grind down the people and prey upon the State in all sorts of dark and nefarious ways. When anything happens, however, they well know how to gloss over their misdeeds with specious falsehoods. Not only do they assist the high official denounced to deceive and hoodwink the Government, they go the length of remorselessly selling him for their own ends. But he ever affords them his protection, and, like as the mother bird stretching out her wings over her young, tenderly supplies all their wants, so does he take upon himself to defend them against the attacks of the Censors, whose accusatory statements by scurrilous calumny he endeavours to prove false. To crown all, he dared deliberately to disregard an Imperial Decree, ordering him to dismiss and remove Ting Ju-ch'ang from his post. A dependency of some thousands of li in extent has thus by his supineness been completely surrendered into the hands of these four or five contemptible persons.

5. The instances above quoted do not by any means complete the record of his misdeeds. Japanese rice steamers were allowed to clear from Chinese ports, and permitted to carry K'aip'ing coal. Japanese spies when caught were either openly discharged or secretly set at liberty.

A man named Wang, living near the Haikuan Su, was apprehended and examined at the instance of the Tientsin hsien; the son of this high official, the late Minister to Japan, however, interceded on his behalf.

On the arrest of the Japanese informer Shih Ch'uan-shih and Liu of the Ordnance Department, evidence was given implicating this son of the high official, herein impeached, together with the heads of that department, whereupon a certain Taotai conveyed to the Tientsin hsien Li Chen-p'eng a hint that this high official desired the suppression of such evidence, and sought to compel him to alter the substance thereof. This interference was, however, so strongly resented that the matter was allowed to drop.

A special application was made to the Throne for authorisation to release a Japanese vessel seized near Formosa. Those entrusted

with the charge of the Ordnance Department sold quantities of the arms that have been accumulating there for years and pocketed the proceeds. After war had broken out, a collection was made of certain useless ammunition for muzzle-loading guns and sold to the Japanese for 140,000 taels, this sum subsequently being divided up amongst the officials attached to the Department. The warrant to pass this ammunition out of store was signed by the high official of whom this memorial treats. It is further a matter of common report that he has millions of taels invested in Japanese coal mines at Ch'ashan, that his son has established three foreign hongs in the Japanese islands, that greed of gain has so clouded his intellect that he is led by the nose by the Japanese, that the announcement of a reverse sustained by China elates him and correspondingly the tidings of a Chinese victory depresses him.

Although these stories constitute but the gossip of the streets, they are current on ten thousand, tongues and can surely not all be utterly without foundation. To sum up, the complete overthrow we have sustained is to be attributed to the want of offensive power displayed by the fleet under the command of Ting Ju-ch'ang. This officer in the first stages of the war kept out of the way of the Japanese, lacking courage to meet them in open fight, and when eventually, while convoying the Ming Army Corps, he did engage in battle, he did so in an unsystematic blundering manner. The *Chihyuen* was the only ship which broke the ranks and rushed to the attack; not one of the others attempted to follow her. Can Ting therefore be said to possess any of the qualities of a Commander-in-Chief? To behead the captain of the *Chihyuen* for being the first to flee but to condone the shortcomings of the officer in supreme command would seem to indicate a certain incongruity, and the memorialist greatly fears no reform in the Navy is possible.

As regards the Army, Wei Ju-kuei is responsible for its defeat. If even the wind conveyed to him the fact that the enemy was near he fled, and Yeh Chih-ch'ao followed him.

It is reported that a few days after we experienced our first defeat Tso Pao-kuei despatched a secret telegram, stating that were Wei's troops withdrawn the others would fight to the death, but were this not done all would be annihilated together. Every form of outrage has been perpetrated by Wei's soldiers in Korea; women were violated, and property was plundered to such an extent that the Koreans no longer regarded us as friends but as enemies, and

it was impossible for our men to secure supplies. When the Army was defeated the Weis, father and son, took refuge in a clump of reeds, where they nearly met death at the hands of their own soldiers, incited to revenge by the way in which these officers had appropriated their pay and generally maltreated them. All the bamboos on the Southern Hills made into books would not suffice to contain the catalogue of their offences. But although their crimes are known to all the world, yet can the Throne not punish them. For so long as a certain high official is retained in power in the North, so long will these great traitors fail to meet with their deserts, so long will the return of a proper spirit to the Army be deferred, and so long will this succession of constant reverses continue. When an army sees its leaders properly rewarded, it is stimulated to perform great deeds, but cases such as the following deprive a soldier of all heart.

Liu Pu-ch'an, although impeached, was appointed by this high official to act as Naval Commander-in-Chief; Liu Kuo-hsiang, although he fought bravely, but lost his ship, was at the instance of this same official temporarily degraded. The greatest culprit of all, Wei Ju-kuei, the man responsible for all defeat and mismanagement, was similarly represented to be of high capacity. The record of his iniquity was by the same hand converted into a list of meritorious actions. With experiences of this kind can any army be expected to hold together? The memorialist had heard that the Ruler of Japan has moved his Court to Hiroshima in order personally to direct the movement of his forces, and that in the beginning of the eighth moon he fixed a term of twenty days within which they were to take Pingyang. Pingyang, as it turned out, fell after sixteen days, and it is now stated that Fengtien is to be taken within four weeks, and that Tientsin and Taku must be captured by the end of the ninth moon.

The number of the Japanese troops is set down at 90,000 men, and having invaded Korea in force they will spread into Manchuria, advance towards Tientsin and Taku, and doubtless attempt to invest Peking. Our military organisation being in no sense reliable and entrusted to the hands of this incompetent, arrogant, unprincipled mismanager of his country's affairs, is it possible with any degree of certitude to put any confidence in the statements of those who assert that the Imperial Mausolea will remain inviolate, and that never need anxious fears disturb the capital?

When war first broke out brave, loyal leaders, such as Sung-ch'ing and Liu Yung-fu, were burning with zeal to proceed to the front, but they were all laid under restraint and kept back by this high official. Amongst the officers that were actually sent Nieh Shih-ch'eng of the Huai Army and Ts'ao K'o-chung of Tientsin had the reputation of being able Generals and superior to the others, but their action was likewise fettered by those of his satellites who accompanied them. The memorialist is given to understand that Sung-ch'ing has been entrusted with the command of the army in the field, but if this official continues to have control at the base, it is to be feared that, his jealousy being excited, he will continue to pursue his obstructive tactics. The transmission of despatches will be delayed, the supplies of food and ammunition will prove defective, and one's blood will be made to run cold by a repetition of the Pingyang disaster.

According to the universal popular opinion this official must be severely reprimanded and removed from Tientsin before our splendid troops and valiant leaders will be able to put forth their utmost strength, and by fighting to the death to wipe out the disgrace of the reverses we have hitherto experienced.

It is for this reason that the fate of the country and the welfare of the people entirely hinge on the retention in or dismissal from office of this one man, and the memorialist ventures to express a hope that his Majesty will deign to issue definite orders in the sense desired. Should the counsels of his party be listened to further, and any compromise, which would lead to a continuance of his tardy and damaging policy be effected, the troops will remain uninspired by a proper martial spirit, Fengt'ien will be invaded, and the fall of Wei-hai-wei and Port Arthur become a moral certainty. Should the second capital (*i.e.* Moukden) be lost, alarm will knock at the gates of the present capital and chaos supervene. To feast off the flesh of that official would then be but of little avail.

As long as he is not removed there is grave reason to fear, moreover, that no response will be made to the urgent daily appeals by the Throne to the people, and a state of things will ensue about which the memorialist does not care to speak. It is on these grounds that he ventures with tears in his eyes to set forth the circum, stances which have roused popular indignation to so high a pitch. Should the Emperor graciously condescend to pay heed to his advice he would humbly request that an experienced and trustworthy

leader, well acquainted with military affairs, be selected and despatched with all haste to the front, in order that the proper measures may be taken forthwith to carry on the war. He is well aware how rash and inexpedient a step it is from a military point of view to supersede a Commander-in-Chief in the field, but if a certain high official goes on protecting his own and giving way to the enemy, the consequences will be so serious and far-reaching that memorialist dare not stand aside and do nothing to avert the ruin, which he sees hanging over his country.

It is reported to-day that the official in question is entering into private negotiations for peace with the Japanese, on the basis of a surrender of Korea and Formosa and the payment of a large sum of money indemnity. Were such a settlement arrived at, were the heritage of our ancestors thus abandoned, or were a drain of this kind made on the wealth of our country, complete disintegration of the Empire would at once set in. Although it is only an unconfirmed rumour, yet previous experience of this official's conduct and proclivities would justify a supposition that he would not rest content until he had carried his perverse folly to even these lengths.

It is therefore the memorialist's earnest prayer that the high official herein arraigned be at once degraded and deposed from office. When this shall have been done peace will once more reign in the ancestral halls, the spirit of our Army will be re-invigorated, and it will be possible to entertain a hope that the lost dependency may yet be recovered.

Such a consummation would, indeed, confer the greatest happiness on the whole Chinese people.

APPENDIX C.

NOTE.

According to Dr. Albrecht Wirtts—

Asia comprises altogether 44 million square kilometres. Of this—

Russia owns 17 million square kilometres with 23 million souls.

China, exclusive of Manchuria, 10·2 million square kilometres with 350 to 400 million souls.

Great Britain 5·3 million square kilometres with 297 million souls.

Manchuria 942,000 square kilometres with 6 to 15 million souls.

According to Mr. Alexis Krausse—

While Great Britain has annexed Chinese territory to the extent of an area of the size of Carnarvonshire, Russia has despoiled the empire of a region rather bigger than the whole of France, Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Spain put together; and France has robbed it of an area of 315,250 square miles, equal to Germany and Austria put together, her trade and commercial interest being the smallest of any first-class Power.

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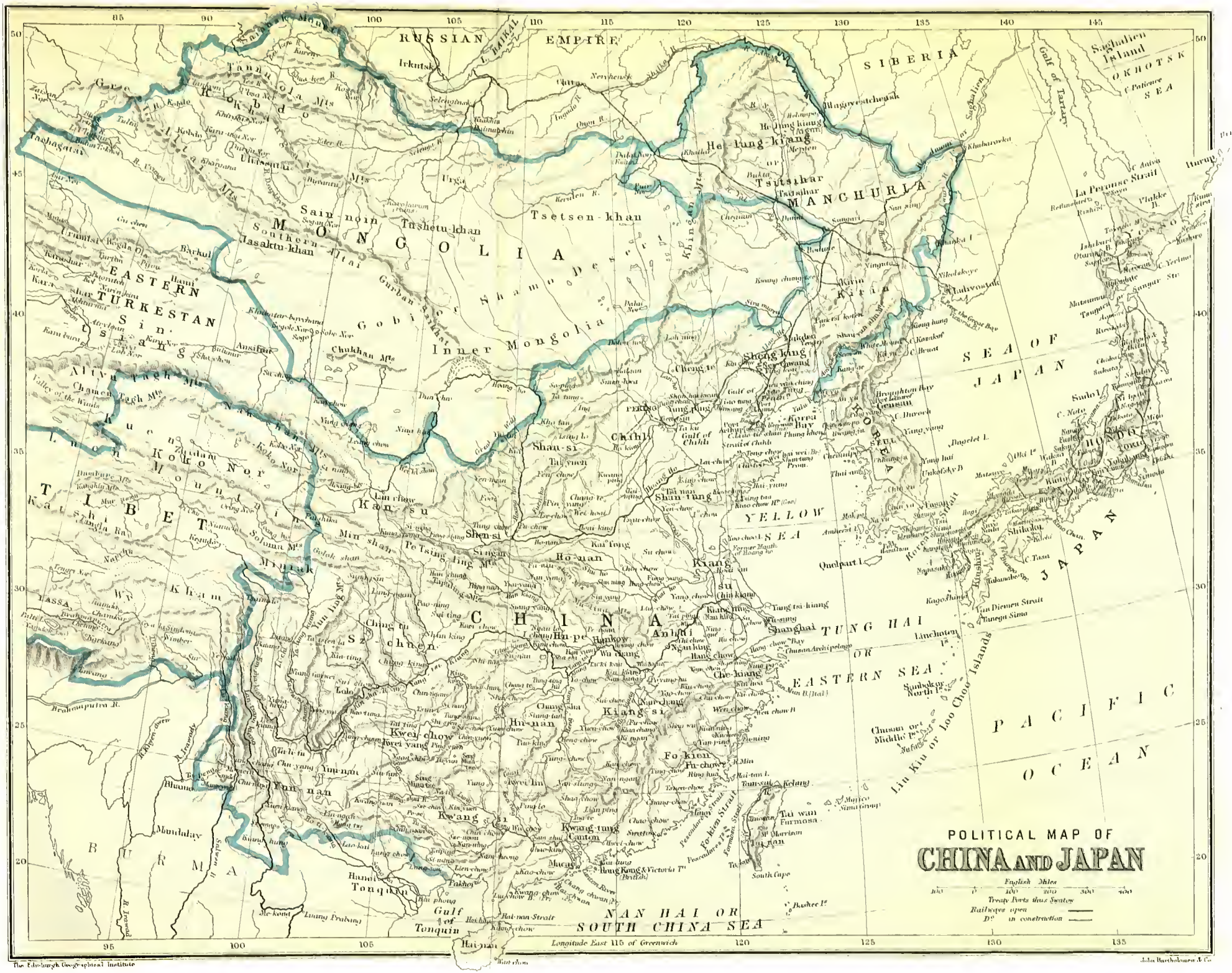

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